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ABSTRACT

This book comprises papers on effectively educating black children. The foreword is by U.S. Representative Augustus F. Hawkins; the introduction is by Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Section I, "School Policy: Formation and Implementation," includes the following papers: (1) "Revisiting School-Community Responsibilities in the Administration of Education" (Francis A. J. Ianni); (2) "High Standards and Great Expectations: The Foundations for Student Achievement" (Bill Honig); (3) "Administrative and Organizational Arrangements and Considerations" (Eugene E. Eubanks and Daniel U. Levine); and (4) "Educating Black Children: An Equity-Based Model" (Charles D. Moody, Sr.). Section II, "Teaching and Learning in the Classroom," includes the following papers: "It Ain't No Consolation" (Alvin F. Poussaint); (2) "Teachers: Potent Forces in the Learning Lives of Black Children" (Charlotte Kendrick Brooks); and (3) "Cooperative Learning and the Education of Black Students" (Robert E. Slavin). Section III, "The Home-School Partnership," contains the following papers: (1) Parent Participation and the Achievement of Disadvantaged Students (Carol Ascher and Erwin Flaxman); (2) "Black Family Stress and School Achievement" (James P. Comer); (3) "Growing Up Literate: Learning from Inner-City Families" (Denny Taylor and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines); and (4) "Working with Families from Diverse Backgrounds" (Patricia A. Edwards). Section IV provides keynote presentations from the National Conferences on Educating Black Children by the following speakers: (1) Mary Hatwood Futrell; (2) Marion Wright Edelman; and (3) Alease Gant. A list of references is provided for each paper. An annotated bibliography on the education of the black child, prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, is included. (BJV)

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EDUCATING BLACK CHILDREN
America's Challenge

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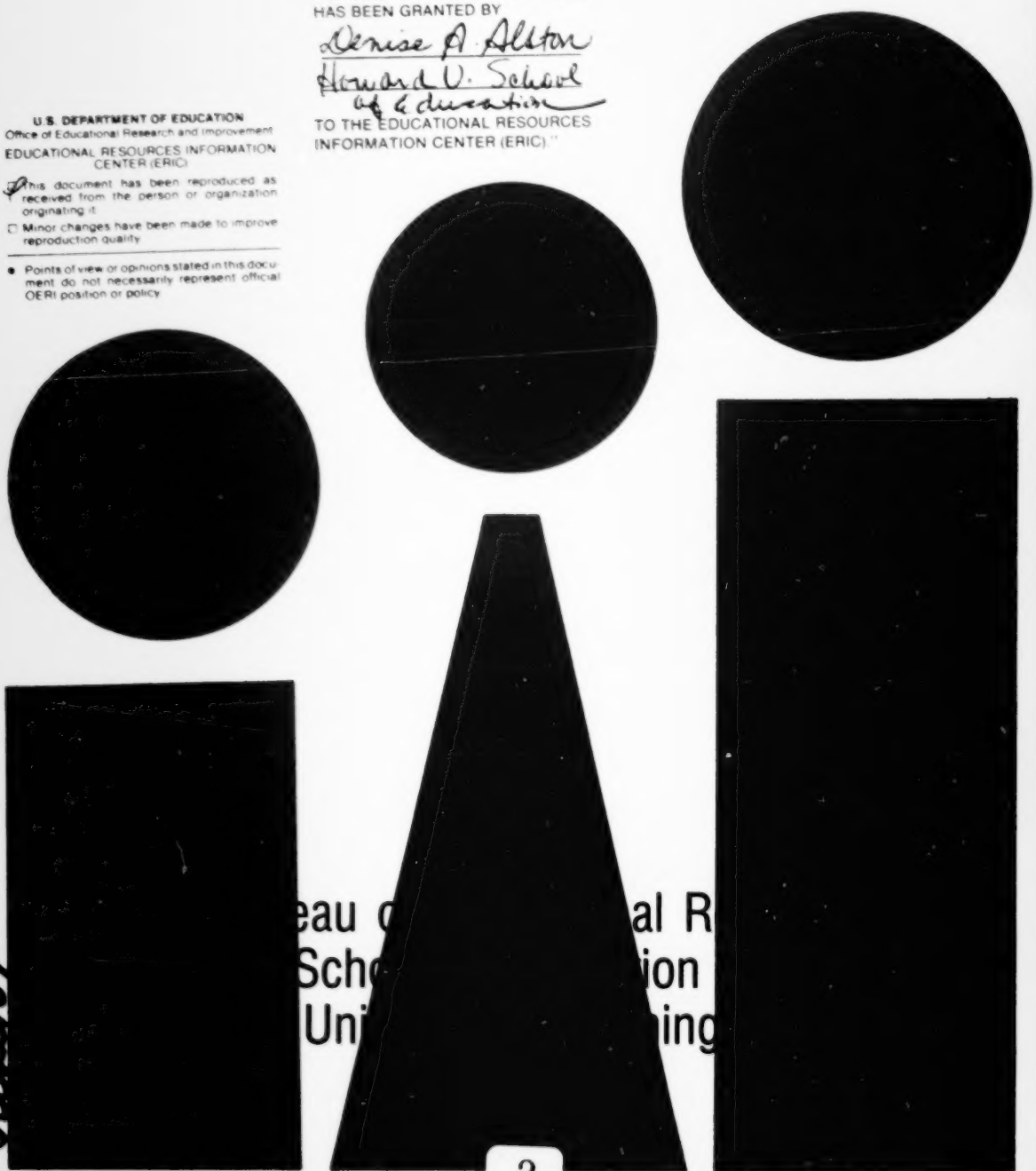

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Educating Black Children: America's Challenge

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Foreword

There is increasing evidence that some schools and school districts are performing significantly above the norm in teaching black children. These children are learning and testing at high levels. Their schools, led by dedicated, determined principals and teachers, have exceedingly tough standards for student achievement, expect students to meet these standards, and correspondingly expect *all* students to succeed academically.

An obvious question, then, is why some schools are well able to teach black children, but other schools fail at this important task. The answer is not an easy one, but some advocates of the growing Effective Schools movement say that schools which effectively teach black children have a series of common factors which emphasize:

—the principal as a strong instructional leader;

—high expectations for student academic achievement and performance;

—consistent evaluation and assessment of student progress;

—a stated, articulated school mission;

—a stable school environment where teaching and learning are enhanced by such stability.

Although these factors (or correlates, as they are sometimes called) are based on a body of research examining school effectiveness, many schools and school districts that adopt the Effective Schools concepts add other factors which answer their unique school need.

Not all schools that effectively teach black children utilize Effective Schools methods, of course. Whatever the case, however, there is ample proof that we already know more than we need to know in order to help black students achieve in school.

An added ingredient in the successful teaching of black children and their successful learning is the sharing of this success with others. With this purpose in mind, a considerably large group of national organizations met early in 1986 and formed the National Conference on Educating Black Children (NCEBC), which sponsored two national conferences at Hunt Valley, Maryland, one in September 1986, the other in May 1987. The culmination of those two conferences was a succinct publication called "A Blueprint for Action." This Blueprint describes in very plain English many immediate, implementable activities to improve teaching and learning for black students. The activities to be implemented are aimed at those who

can carry out such activities, and who also have the greatest impact on the classroom—school administrators, teachers, parents, students, boards of education (policymakers), and the community.

An equally important conference culmination was the decision by NCEBC to publish a monograph on issues pertinent to the successful education of black children. NCEBC invited some of the nation's most distinguished educational thinkers to participate in this endeavor. This monograph serves to remind us that immense creative thought is being generated on the matter of educating black children. Further, substantial resources and energy are effectuating change and improvement in the education of black children.

There is a reciprocal relationship between Blueprint II, formulated by NCEBC participants, and the invited papers of this monograph. These works complement and supplement each other. The educational thinkers affect policies and practices formulated for black children/youth, while practitioners who work with and are concerned about black young people affect the educational thinkers. Often practitioners have been critical of theoretical policies and plans—or the lack of them—formulated to improve the quality of education provided black youth. Several of the articles in the monograph are statements from respected, reflective authors whose views have hitherto been omitted from the current "educational reform movement." They deserve to be heard.

The task of successfully educating black children, addressed in part by the Blueprint for Action and the conference monograph, is ongoing. It is one which the NCEBC will continue to monitor and share with the nation. It is to this end that the monograph provides its greatest function and purpose.

Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins, Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor

Introduction

By the year 2000, one of every five pupils in the nation's public schools will be nonwhite. The education system will include more children who are poor and will be more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before. Our schools will be challenged anew to make good on the nation's commitment to provide quality education for all of its children regardless of their economic and ethnic backgrounds.

This book considers the education of the black child, focusing especially on those who often have been bypassed and prejudicially neglected by our education system. Black students account for about 15 percent of the public school population today and will account for approximately 19 percent of all precollege students at the end of the century. Unless we deepen our commitment to these young Americans, the gap between the haves and have-nots in education will widen and the promise of excellence in American education will remain sadly unfulfilled.

One of the most important insights provided by the essays in this volume is the urgent reminder that the school is a *connected* institution and that poor performance in school may, in fact, have roots in events that precede schooling or even birth itself. For example, although black students come from all economic sectors of our society, those who encounter educational difficulty most frequently come from families that are poor and nutritionally deprived.

A major report by the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in America revealed that the child with inadequate nutrition during the prenatal period and critical early years of brain growth risks "cognitive deficits" that restrict learning later on. In a recent Louisiana study, poor children who had received food supplements during the first year of life and whose mothers had received nutritional support during pregnancy were compared with children who had been nutritionally denied. Those in the first group showed higher IQ, longer attention span, and better grades in school. The obvious conclusion is that all mothers and young children must have good nutrition if good schooling is our goal.

Several contributors also remind us of yet another kind of enrichment that should be cultivated outside the schools. Francis A. J. Ianni speaks of the "alterable curriculum of the home," that includes such conditions as supervised homework, controlled television watching, and a "facilitating environment" that surrounds a child with "the objects, ideas, values, and other cultural symbols" that stimulate curiosity and encourage learning. At a time when the "traditional

family'' has taken a dramatic turn, when more and more children have only one parent living with them in the home, schools increasingly will be called upon to provide *pre*kindergarten programs. This future was dramatically predicted by the nation's governors when, in a recent report, they urged states to provide quality early education for at-risk four-year-olds and, ''where possible,'' for *three*-year-olds as well!

Alvin F. Poussaint's powerfully insightful contribution reminds us of the need to focus on language in the education of black children, especially in the early years. Language, we are reminded, is not just a subject to be taught. It is the means by which all other subjects are pursued. Through language we learn to think clearly and to share knowledge and experience with each other. Through writing and critical thinking skills we acquire the power to play a more significant role in our own education quite apart from what may be available in the classroom.

That kind of empowerment is essential, Poussaint writes, if blacks are to avoid ''continued servitude'' at the low end of economic achievement. He cites one expert who estimates that the inevitable loss of productivity absorbed by companies that have to hire large numbers of workers who cannot read, write, or count costs American business $25 billion a year.

What is clear is that for all children—and especially those who may be nutritionally or educationally deprived—we need to organize a new schooling unit that might be called *The Basic School,* to include kindergarten through grade three. In such a school, grade levels would be blurred. It is foolish for teachers to fret over whether to ''fail'' a student in grades one or two. After all, children develop at different rates and whether a student is in the ''first'' grade or ''second'' grade is inconsequential. An early experience of failure, on the other hand, may dampen hope and start children on a tragic spiral downward.

The Basic School would have one fundamental goal: to empower students in the use of symbols and to assure that every child reads with understanding, writes with clarity, and speaks and listens effectively. From the first, children would be speaking, talking about words, listening to stories, building a vocabulary, writing, reading, becoming linquistically empowered.

The early introduction of these basic learning skills should be accompanied by reinforcement in the home that, unfortunately, is unavailable to many children now. Today, at least 7 percent come home to an empty house or apartment. As this ''latch key'' problem grows, schools will, of necessity, operate on a longer day and

offer after-hours programs such as special studies in science, computers, music, or athletics.

The danger is that affluent families will find their own services—summer camps, private lessons, and youth clubs, for example—while poor children will be allowed to drift. In 1982, 53 percent of upper- and middle-income families had their preschool children in special programs. Only 29 percent of at-risk three- and four-year-olds were so enrolled. If this gap is to be narrowed, new enrichment programs—which might be called *Extended School*—should be optionally available to serve *all* students, not just the privileged few.

I am also intrigued by the suggestion that youth-operated networks might be developed to provide peer counselling and other opportunities for young people to discuss the pressures and problems they encounter both in and out of school. Student service programs, something we have urged high schools to adopt as a new "Carnegie unit," might well reinforce the notion that students can be teachers, too.

Thus, the essays in this book address the most urgent question for the nation as we move toward the year 2000. Simply put: Will America continue to believe in education for all its children, or will it sort out schooling between the winners and the losers—and, in so doing, become a separated and more divided nation? The contributors to this volume clearly believe, as do I, that we have no choice. Our commitment must be to serve *all* children.

For three centures, education has been at the heart of our national achievements. But the agenda is unfinished. Urgent new priorities have emerged and more, not less, education is required.

The aim of education in our democracy is not only to prepare the young for work, but to equip them to live with dignity and purpose; not only to generate new knowledge, but to channel knowledge to humane ends; not merely to learn about our civic institutions, but to shape a citizenry that can weigh decisions wisely and promote the public good.

If minority students continue to leave school and college at the current rate, a shockingly large proportion of our youth will find it difficult, if not impossible, to realize their full potential. If America fails these students, the need for informed participants in our complex society will go unfulfilled.

Ernest L. Boyer
President
The Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement
of Teaching

Section I:

School Policy: Formation and Implementation

Many factors influence school policy—community priorities, pupil achievement, and local resources are but a few. Administrators are not only charged with the task of helping to shape school policy, they must also ensure that the determined policy is carried out in an effective and equitable manner. The authors in this section address policy and administrative responsibility in a variety of ways. Ianni discusses the respective roles and responsibilities of the school and the community in establishing educational policy for black children. Focusing on the adolescent, Ianni stresses the importance of multi-institutional responsibilities for improving the achievement of black children and of the need for significant adults as social models and mentors through which black youth may gain a sense of social competence and personal identity.

Honig emphasizes the need to establish high standards and expectations for all students. In his discussion, he outlines related issues and problems, offers strategies, and provides examples of programs that have worked in California. Eubanks and Levine establish a strong case for improved resources for schools in poverty areas. They offer a number of concrete suggestions to administrators for improving organizational arrangements, testing, school structure, and staffing. Finally, Moody outlines an equity-based model for examining options and interventions that might help improve education. He concludes this section by using his model to evaluate a number of well-known programs.

Revisiting School-Community Responsibilities in the Administration of Education

Francis A. J. Ianni, *Teachers College, Columbia University*

Few issues have dominated the education of black children and confounded educational administrators for so long and with such confusion as the question of the respective roles and responsibilities of the school and the community. The comparative data from each of the many communities I have studied clearly indicate a *synergistic* rather than an independent pattern of relationships among institutional contexts having impact on the lives of adolescents. How the various social contexts of a community are integrated in terms of continuity and congruence emerges as the most important determinant of how adolescence will be experienced and with what results.

There is a good deal of information available on both environmental and developmental aspects of adolescent behavior in specific contexts such as the school, the family, and the criminal justice system. Very little information is available on the social organization of behaviors across these contexts and how they are internalized by adolescents. We have some interesting examples that show that social learning is largely externally and contextually organized; what may be valued in one institutional context (school), may well not be in another (peer group). Different rules and roles emerge from different domains and different institutions. Reflectively differentiating between them during adolescence is a slow process that requires an understanding of societal and personal relations.

Unfortunately, particularly in those communities where the family and the school are in opposition, where the workplace proclaims its inability to hire youngsters who were neither motivated

by their families nor made literate by the schools, and where the criminal justice systems see each of these institutions as antagonistic, the adolescent is left to rationalize these competing, and sometimes conflicting, ideologies for himself or herself. Conflict and confusion must occur when various social institutions (the home, school, workplace, etc.) present different standards of adulthood. Recent attempts to establish a nationwide minimum age of 21 for legal use of alcohol, for example, would mean that, in some states, a youth could not drink for a period of three years after being considered old enough to vote or, if a male, to be drafted into the armed services. It would also mean that he or she could not drink until five years after being able to marry in some states and seven years after he or she could be tried as an adult for felonies which carry the death penalty. While we are raising the age of legal attainment of adulthood for some activities, we are lowering it for others. Despite all we know about individual differences in maturation and development, we continue to think of and treat adolescents as members of an age-grade.

It is critically important to provide some comprehensive, holistic means of examining how the variety of social contexts of a commuity interact to produce the experience of the black adolescent. Current social models, such as "peer culture" approaches, have obscured the conjunctive effects of the pattern of relationships among institutions. They have also underestimated the role or roles of adults as important and valued sources of help in the adolescent's search for a congruent structure within which to develop an identity.

An example here is the continued concern over the involvement of black youth in delinquent and criminal behavior. Schools as well as peers have been seen as contributing to youth crime, particularly in black inner-city urban settings. The sociological literature, for example, continues to implicate school failure experiences as alienating the youngsters from conventional achievement goals and leading them toward delinquency, particularly when lower-class cultural orientation derogates academic goals. Yet, in this same literature and in popular opinion as well, it is the school—much less frequently the family or the peer group—that is inevitably seen as the locus for re-education whenever such problems as alcohol or drug abuse or delinquency escalate to a national concern.

The school, of course, is not singly responsible for the failure of socialization in childhood and so cannot hope to remediate such problems by itself. This realization, which supports my insistence on an inter-institutional context for adolescent development, clearly indicates that it is in the relationships among the socializing institutions—the family, the peer group, the school, and the criminal justice system—that most of the professionals and many of the delinquents

feel the community should implement both preventive and remedial programs.

Of particular interest are the two most common perspectives toward delinquent behavior we found in our research. A widespread theory of delinquency among juvenile justice specialists is that of the "delinquent subculture," which holds that adolescent socialization is determined by the opportunity structures for either legitimate or illegitimate behavior found in different types of communities. If the community is organized against crime, then youth can utilize available legitimate means to achieve important life goals; if it is organized for crime, with pressures and opportunities to engage in illegal means of attainment, then youth either cannot utilize legitimate means or must be effectively socialized to seek them out.

Another perspective on juvenile delinquency sees socialization of individual adolescents as the *sine qua non* of what leads to delinquent and criminal behavior in any community, and so sees no need for any "sub-culture" to exist. In this approach, the basic assumption is that inadequate or ineffective socialization leaves the individual free to become involved in delinquent behavior. Parents and professionals who accept this viewpoint believe that adolescent delinquent behavior develops when the bond to society is diminished or destroyed. The elements of this bond are the internalized attitudes of attachment, belief, commitment, and involvement that are fostered by the essential units of community social control—the family, the school, and the law. Proponents of this theory rely on epigenetic or stage theory when they propose a sequential process in which the individual finds attachment in relation to the family, with the school fostering commitment to a pattern of educational and occupational goals and the development of belief in the rules of society.

Thus, this emphasis on socialization in both causal theory and remediation programs relates youthful crime and deviance quite directly to the major socialization agencies of the family, the school, and the peer group. Still at issue, however, is the relative importance of each in the development of delinquent patterns in youth. It is of major importance that school administrators and the black community work together to devise answers to a number of confounding questions: How can the family, the peer group, the school, and the criminal justice system set and enforce norms that inhibit juvenile delinquency? How can communities organize to help the adolescent to differentiate among conflicting norms in the social contexts? Do school, juvenile justice, and mental health programs serve different kinds of adolescents differently in this regard? When an adolescent gets into trouble with the law, how does this change his or her relationship to the school, the peer group, and the family?

One of the most challenging issues concerning the socialization of black (as well as other) youngsters concerns their obvious and compelling search for some social and psychological structure, some "roadmap" to help guide their movement from child to adult status. In the past, adolescence was seen as a bridge from childhood to adulthood, and so a part of the life cycle in society. But from the 1960s on, particularly as a result of sociologist James Coleman's book *The Adolescent Society* (1961), we began to hear about a unique "subculture," a distinct and discreet adolescent social system. More than simply an age-grade in the ongoing life cycle of society, this adolescent sub- or counter-culture had its own psychological, social, cultural and even economic unity, capable of resisting or countering the adult society's demands for integration into the general community. Adolescents, individually and collectively, were described as isolated from the world of adult work, frequently antagonistic, and resistant to adult teachings and demands. Neither parents nor teachers acted as models of adulthood to youth; adolescents found their ego-ideals, we were told, in the images presented in films, books, and on television.

In my research I have also found that adolescents do turn from parental to peer models for day-to-day social learning and that adolescent peer groups serve as reference groups in which adolescents observe and evaluate their social behavior and attitudes. Our data also indicate clearly that by middle adolescence (and especially late adolescence, when youth are thinking about their own future adult roles), young people turn to adults who function within some valued social context for information, validation, and endorsement. Frequently, we find, such adults are professionals—teachers, counselors, coaches, social agency or youth workers, for example—in some school or community setting in which the adolescent is developing a sense of social competence. They also seem to turn much more to their parents than we have been led to believe. The adolescent's feelings about such adults often becomes idealized to the point of hero or heroine worship. Within the youth networks associated with the organizational setting, such adults can and do have important influence in shaping the future lives of the youth. Yet we also find that most adults, both parents and professionals, have become discouraged, almost cynical, about how and to what ends youth can be socialized.

What I see as important here is not just the role of the individual adult, but how the adult community can help adolescents in their search for a congruent psychic structure of new ideals and values, socially pro-active rules for behavior, and life goals within which to achieve the reorganization of the self that is the essence of becom-

ing an adult. There is considerable evidence that the development of identity in adolescence is not sufficiently or even primarily explained by peer relationships. Rather, the adolescent search for identity is a transactional process with parents and other adults, whereby the adolescent hopes to help shape the effective environment for this transformation of the self. As part of this search, the adolescent looks to significant adults as social models and mentors through which to structure a unified view of the requirements for social competence and to consolidate his or her identity.

Such a socially constructive approach to peer group formation and affiliation during adolescence could have important outcomes. One would be its effect on how parents, professionals, and adolescents themselves deal with the dramatic and often tragic social problems associated with this period of life, particularly (with the significant exception of teenage suicide) among black youth. There is some disagreement about the extent to which adolescent social problems are mediated through group membership or are the result of individual pathologies. A number of studies have found that the attitudes and behaviors of an adolescent's friends in relation to sexual, drug, and delinquent activity are strong determinants of the adolescent's actual behavior both in terms of providing a normative framework and access to substances or settings. Other studies have found that while conformity is characteristic of adolescence, other factors such as the need for acceptance, the fear of rejection, and the desire to escape loneliness are as important as the need to comply. Once again, this artificial distinction between individual and social forces in the development of adolescent problem behavior is an unnecessary and often confounding barrier to determining how we should work with youths. The development of an adolescent's identity and value system is a dynamic interplay between modeling parents and other significant adults, sensitivity to peer influences, and the individual's own struggle for independence.

Parental values and behavior in relation to education in particular can have life-long effects on adolescents. There are some important indications in our research and elsewhere that the "alterable curriculum of the home" (supervised homework, controlled television viewing, etc.) is twice as predictive of academic learning as is family socioeconomic status. Parental behaviors at home, as well as school efforts to promote home learning both affect student achievement. We find that two types of parents influence achievement: well-educated parents who are expected to help their children and parents who are helped to help their children through school support activities. Clearly, where schooling is concerned, parents have not lost their influence on their children.

There are, however, clear and disturbing social indicators that the "traditional" American family, the model upon which our school-home relationship has been based, is disappearing. Today, only 17 percent of our families have the traditional structure of a father, mother, and children all living together. Typically, the traditional family used to be the one-income family where one parent (usually the mother) remained at home to care for and socialize the children. As recently as 1970, well over one-half of all American families were one-income; current estimates are that by 1990 only one-third of all American families will have only one wage earner. Of the remaining two-thirds, about one-half will be two-income families with both parents working (these accounted for 26 percent of all families in 1970) and the other half will be single-parent families (22 percent of all families in 1970), the vast majority of which will have only the mother present. And "present" in these instances will not mean for the full day, since 70 percent of all single parents in such households today are employed full-time. That proportion is expected to rise. Such single-parent families headed by single women now comprise over half of all black households.

The projected picture for divorce rates is just as bleak. While we are all familiar with the escalating divorce rate, we are not as familiar with the fact that remarriages after divorce are declining—down about 17 percent over the past decade. What this means is that about 27 percent of all children in the United States will be living with a lone parent; of these 27 percent only about two or three percent will be living with their father, while 24 percent may be living with their mother. Finally, close to 35 percent of children may expect to live with a stepparent during a part of their childhood.

Whatever these social statistics say about the future of American society and the family, they are a clear indication that many of our ideas about who will socialize children into adult roles must be reexamined. There are clear indications in our research that many adolescents are already seeking adult referents other than their parents, despite the fact that the debate over the relative influence of adults and age mates is almost exclusively cast in terms of parents versus peers. Such adults serve as role models, but also perform a more distinct function of ushering adolescents into special worlds, e.g., the worlds of computers, the martial arts, or theater. In these functionally developed "peer groups," the actions, the learning, even the conversational language of the adolescents seem to become shared experiences in which the whole group participates. Inevitably, there seems to be some valorized, often even idealized, adult who possesses the functionally valued information that the adolescents want and need to operate effectively and efficiently in that domain.

The role of adult mediators will become increasingly important as the socialization of children becomes more difficult to sustain with the decline of fully functioning families. New socialization roles will thus become necessary to create new environments for adolescent socialization. These roles will involve a variety of adults, such as older citizens who adopt parental and grandparental roles (for youngsters who have not had this experience); professionals as well will play new and more sensitive roles. There are many opportunities for adult/adolescent interaction within communities—in the school, in social agencies, in extra-curricular activities, in institutional settings, or in natural, neighborhood settings. Schools and other youth-oriented institutions need practical advice as to how they can better function as facilitating environments for black youngsters and how they can work in concert with other significant adults and other social domains in the community.

What we are really proposing here amounts to a new theory of educational productivity, with two sets of factors—student aptitude factors and environmental factors—whose optimization increases affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning. Environmental factors include the home, the classroom social group, and the peer group outside the school. These factors are somewhat more susceptible to directed alteration and clearly hold the best hope for increasing educational productivity. Even more pertinent is the evidence that the adolescent peer group has considerable influence on attitudes, behaviors, academic expectations, and achievement. Despite concerns about the negative effects of peer groups, the influence of such groups outside the school is moderate when compared to the positive effects of the in-school and in-class climates perceived by students. The psychosocial morale and climate of the classroom, for example, is a strong predictor of behavioral, affective, and cognitive development. Positive school and classroom peer group relationships can produce group cohesiveness, satisfaction with schooling, goal direction, and positive self-image. They can and should be put to use both in keeping youngsters in school and in maintaining relationships between dropouts and education programs.

Thus, one school-community alternative is to literally *negotiate* peer group formation in the school. This could lead to the creation of a youth-operated support network, a kind of youth-to-youth network, which would provide a forum for peer-mediated counseling, role models, and any assistance necessary for young persons to express or share the pressures and problems with which they must contend. It is critical that such a program not be designed by adults for use by children; rather, the responsibility for the design and operation must be jointly worked out with adolescents (creating new

roles for them at the outset). Such student support systems, with small groups of students working together, helping each other when they encounter difficulties, and generally engaging in cooperative learning, will not only significantly raise cognitive and affective scores, but they will forge social bonds which can help bind the adolescents to their classmates and to the school. The importance of such social support systems for youngsters is particularly acute where traditional kin-based ties and facilitating groups do not seem to supply the necessary network and bonds. The needs are even stronger for those socially and educationally marginal young people who become dropouts. Such a social support system is necessary in the service of helping youngsters to manage their educational and occupational development, and there is evidence that social support has positive effects on physical health as well. It has been found to be of such importance for emotional well-being that the President's Task Force on Mental Health has included the concept of social support groups as one of its recommendations.

The social integration of a community's family, school, and peer systems, both within and among each of these systems, is clearly the most important factor in developing and maintaining the attachment which produces positive social ties. It also develops a motivation to conform to societal norms and expectations. We have, of course, always known that student achievement and academic aspirations are influenced by the home environment. But our findings go beyond this to indicate that intervention in the educational environment of the home can result in vastly more effective educational programs. Part of our research addresses the influence of parents and other adults on adolescent acquisition of norms and values. School personnel may have influence in their roles as teachers, activity sponsors, counselors, etc. Parents may have influence both through their general family behavior and also, more specifically, through the ways in which they participate in their children's learning, either at home (helping with homework) or at school (attending school-sponsored activities). Models for new adult roles in relation to adolescents, and new ways to create and facilitate those roles, must be developed. These may range from school intervention in or assistance with "the alterable curriculum of the home" to using parents in new ways in the schools.

In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1958), Freud asks, "What would be the use of the most acute analysis of social neurosis since no one possesses the power to compel the community to adopt the therapy?" It may not be possible or even desirable to compel communities to act on the disparity among the patterns of rules and roles which their constituent social institutions provide for adolescents.

What seems necessary, however, is for parents and professionals to at least understand how the adolescent transition to adulthood is molded by different institutional contexts; how adolescents internalize the rules and conventions of these contexts individually and collectively; and how and why adolescents cope or fail to cope with contradictions. In the administration of educational programs for black youth—indeed, for all youth—we can and *must* go forward with the work of developing just such pro-active social and individual programs of positive development.

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High Standards and Great Expectations: The Foundations for Student Achievement

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Throughout history, the United States has been the land of opportunity—for the poor, the oppressed, for anyone who dreamed of creating a better future. Education is critical in translating this dream into a reality; however, for black students, lowered expectations have too often prevented them from reaching their academic potential. Academic and career success depends on our ability to engage *all* students in a challenging curriculum that prepares them for the workplace or for higher education. In California, as well as in other states, educational reform efforts are needed in order to give every student the strong academic foundation he or she needs to compete in today's complex society.

THE DREAM

During the 1960s, the civil rights movement successfully created a greater awareness of the need for black students to participate fully at all levels of our educational system. The educational community began to design and implement programs to help black students achieve their educational goals and much progress was made. On the other hand, several disturbing trends indicate that we must do much more to prepare black students for higher education and career success now.

First, the proportion of black high school graduates going on to college dropped by 11 percent between 1975 and 1981, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In addition, the proportion of black students enrolled in graduate school has dropped over the past five years from more than 6 percent to 4.2 percent. The college enrollment discrepancy between black and white students can be attributed to lowered expectations for blacks,

and a tendency to enroll black students in a less challenging curriculum. Black high school students are underrepresented in academic programs and overrepresented in vocational education programs. In addition, black students are less likely to be in programs for the gifted and talented.

There is a direct correlation between kindergarten through grade twelve academic preparation and a student's ability to enroll and succeed in post-secondary education. If we want to increase the number of black students who enter college and succeed there, we must focus our efforts on providing strong academic preparation for *all* students.

There are two schools of thought on how to provide quality education for black students. Very simply, the question is this: Do we expect as much from black students as we do from whites (e.g., requiring successful completion of a strong academic curriculum); or do we lower our expectations, as well as our standards, by allowing black students to enroll in simple, basic courses that promise easy acquisition of a high school diploma? In other words, do we direct black students into special programs that separate them from the mainstream student population, or do we encourage and support them in mastering a strong core curriculum—uniting them with other students who have high aspirations?

The curious thing about this choice is that more whites than blacks advocate special treatment for black students. When I discuss with black parents what they want most for their children, they overwhelmingly support high standards, tough courses, and more homework. They want their children to work hard. Black parents realize that the ability to compete, both in school and in the job market, is their children's greatest chance for achieving lifelong success. If black students are diverted from the traditional academic curriculum, their ability to compete is seriously jeopardized.

Of course, some children do need special help in school. The key to providing this type of help is to identify students who are having academic problems and provide assistance *before* continuing failure demoralizes them.

Unfortunately, some people argue that it is unfair to expect black students to do the more difficult work required by a rigorous academic curriculum. This argument is presented without evidence; in fact, scores in reading, writing, vocabulary, math, science, and civics on the National Center for Education test show that, among high school sophomores who do not go on to college, those who eventually dropped out scored better as a group than those who earned their diplomas. In other words, smart students enrolled in a general track program become bored, become pregnant, or obtain

a job before they finish high school. In a recent national poll, 66 percent of black children said that school was too easy for them. This wasting of human potential must stop—we have to challenge students to achieve while providing them the support they need to succeed.

Another argument used to defend a less rigorous education is that traditional education is elitist—that it is not relevant to black culture and values. This argument promotes division rather than unity because it further separates blacks from the mainstream society where they will eventually have to compete for jobs. Education should open up new vistas for students, not foreclose them. Education that separates rather than unites keeps the majority of blacks class-bound and destined to remain educationally and professionally disadvantaged.

THE STRATEGIES

Our mission is clear, but that alone does not solve the problems that exist. As educators, we must take a decisive step forward—one that captures attention, provides leadership, and galvanizes action toward our goal. For this reason, Representative Augustus Hawkins and the many national cosponsoring agencies deserve our appreciation for convening the National Conference on Educating Black Children. The "Blueprint for Action" from this conference is a vital step toward stimulating federal, state, and local governments; community groups; schools; and parents nationwide to join together in meeting the challenge of high standards.

In our educational efforts, we must define where we are going and achieve a professional consensus about our destination. In California, for example, our educational reform efforts have embraced all students by emphasizing a strong academic curriculum that encourages every student to reach his or her potential. A 1985 report on improving the academic preparation of blacks for university-level study, prepared by Dr. Winston Doby from UCLA for the University of California Council of Black Administrators, reinforces and establishes the need for this approach.

In addition, all children develop cognitive processes that either help or hinder their abilities to make good decisions. Consequently, our schools must integrate the teaching of reasoning and critical thinking into content instruction. By doing so, we will allow our students to gain a better understanding of their world and to develop the ability to make informed decisions about their futures.

Of course, it is not enough to say that we want improvement—we must set targets and monitor, evaluate, and adjust educational programs to meet these targets. By using school performance data

and sharing information about successful programs, educators can create or adapt innovative programs to their needs.

Toward this end, the California Department of Education is developing a handbook for educators that discusses various instructional strategies that can be used locally. This handbook will help districts evaluate their resources and design effective long-range programs.

Legislation that promotes local flexibility and increases students' educational opportunities also helps districts plan effective programs. For example, California Senate Bill 65 (*Torres, 1985*) is designed to improve the schools' holding power and dropout recovery. The bill provides legislative direction and funding for districts having students with special needs. The legislation increases the schools' flexibility to use categorical aid for programs such as school improvement, compensatory education, gifted and talented, and special education. It also increases the school districts' flexibility to use apportionment funds for programs such as independent study, continuing education, and adult education. Waiving regulations for using such funds encourages districts to develop comprehensive programs for high-risk youth. Funding is also made available from the model programs repository for schools to implement exemplary programs. In addition, the bill created a new outreach consultant position for schools with programs to help high-risk youth.

Further legislative direction and funding for districts having students with special needs is provided by Assembly Bill 65, (*Greene, 1977*). This bill allows for improvement of kindergarten through grade 12 programs by involving school staff, parents, secondary students, and school-site council members in participating districts to improve elementary and secondary education. Developing programs such as career guidance and off-campus study enables schools to be more responsive to student needs. In addition, Assembly Bill 65 includes funding for staff development and teacher resource centers.

Assembly Bill 777 (*Greene, 1981*) allows schools to coordinate resources from eleven funding sources, including career guidance, special education, and school improvement monies so that they have more flexibility in using special funds.

California Programs that Work

In California, various programs have helped to improve black students' academic success. The California Department of Education is involved in developing many of these programs, most of which can be replicated nationwide.

The Sequoia Union High School District's *Computer and Electronics Academies* have been largely responsible for reducing the dropout rate for low-achieving students. Academy students must complete a strong academic curriculum while gaining specialized knowledge and marketable skills. Although the program was designed to encourage students to complete high school and to prepare them for jobs, a significant number of Academy graduates are going on to post-secondary education.

The *Oakland Scholars/Achievement Mentor Program*, in the Oakland Unified School District, identifies high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate outstanding potential. Mentors from business fields offer encouragement and information about higher education to the students and to the parents. Business-education partnership programs such as these have been successful throughout California.

At Willard Junior High School in the Berkeley Unified School District, students who need additional help in reading participate in a supplementary class supported by compensatory education funds. These students remain in the regular classroom, and also receive help in the supplementary class where they work on the reading materials *before* the materials are assigned in the regular class. In this way the students are prepared to read the assignment, whether it be a novel, play, or poetry, when the regular class begins studying the work. In addition, once the work is assigned in the regular class the students receive no further help in the supplementary class. This preteaching program is effective because it reinforces the regular program rather than providing extra work that does not relate to the core curriculum. In addition to *enabling* students to do the regular work, it *empowers* them by helping them before they have had a chance to fail. As a result, students feel that they have succeeded on their own in their regular class.

Another successful program began in 1978 when the California Department of Education organized the *University and College Opportunities (UCO) Program* to develop college preparatory programs for students underrepresented in higher education institutions. This comprehensive program provides support in areas such as curriculum, instruction, and counseling. It also encourages parental involvement and is affiliated with business and community agencies. UCO hosts seminars and conferences that develop student awareness of educational issues. These events provide opportunities to develop student leadership, motivation, and practical skills such as preparing students for university entrance and postsecondary academic success. Many black students live in an environment that lacks college-educated role models, exposure to cultural experiences,

and rewards for academic achievement. UCO programs compensate for these environmental disadvantages and help students understand the long-range opportunities possible if they pursue higher education.

Low scores on college admissions tests also prevent many black students from pursuing higher education. Assembly Bill 2321 (*Tanner, 1986*) provides funding for nine UCO-administered pilot projects that help students prepare for these tests.

The *Standard English Program (SEP)* is designed to improve the oral, reading, and writing proficiency of speakers of black language in kindergarten through grade twelve. The California Department of Education implemented this program in 1981 because traditional English instruction emphasizes learning proficiency primarily through written exercises. SEP, on the other hand, uses intensive, oral language-based activities to improve the proficiency in standard English among speakers of black language.

Cooperative programs among schools can coordinate resources and plan comprehensive curricula that advance the student without duplicating or omitting information. Such programs can also track student progress. For example, three schools in South Central Los Angeles—95th Street Elementary, Bret Harte Intermediate, and Washington Senior High Preparatory School—have developed programs that emphasize academic excellence for all students. During the past two years, absenteeism has been reduced from 30 percent to less than 10 percent and approximately 80 percent of Washington Preparatory School's graduates have enrolled in college.

Parental Involvement and Community Support

As indicated by Ianni in this publication, the home and community are also strong influences on black students' academic success. Because nearly 50 percent of all black children live below the poverty line, many families cannot finance higher education without substantial, reliable financial aid programs. Reductions in federal financial aid programs have seriously jeopardized black students' abilities to complete postsecondary education, and we must lobby actively to increase these funds. Scholarships offered through business/education partnerships, as well as work-study programs, provide benefits to both sponsors—who develop qualified future employees—and students—who gain practical knowledge that will give them a head start in their careers.

The home and community also affect students' perceptions of their goals, values, and opportunities. Many black children do not aspire to higher education because they may have a limited understanding of the opportunities that exist for students who excel

academically. In addition, many black children may lack significant role models within the black community; obviously this can be a limiting factor for many black students. Since role models are important to children, strong efforts should be made to increase the number of black teachers in the schools.

In California, the State Department of Education has launched "A Class Act: Be a Teacher" public awareness campaign to encourage young people to pursue teaching careers. Activities throughout the state reinforce the teacher recruitment message. The California legislature has passed a resolution which supports establishing Teachers of Tomorrow Clubs in grades seven through twelve. Further, Crenshaw High School in Los Angeles has a Teacher Training Academy that provides extensive practical classroom experience, as well as a solid background in the basic subject areas. Although the program is designed for all students who are interested in becoming teachers, minority students are especially encouraged to enroll in the Academy because of the urgent need to increase the number of minority teachers in our schools.

Low income levels can also prevent black children from participating in cultural and intellectual events that are commonplace for white children. Black children must have opportunities to attend these functions. Community programs that involve local groups such as the media, sports, and law enforcement can also develop programs that use each group's facilities and talents.

Furthermore, we must implement parental involvement programs that teach parents how to help their children succeed. In California, the "Parents Are Teachers, Too" program, with its pamphlets and public service announcements, lets parents know that what they do with their children at home can significantly impact upon how well those children do in school.

In addition, the State Department of Education has sponsored workshops and, along with the University of California, has sponsored a major Los Angeles conference for parents, planned by parents and targeted to the parents of minority children. Workshop topics include the school-church partnership, financial aid, and parents as partners in the educational process.

Parents should also be encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences and school functions. These activities must be made more accessible to working parents and those without transportation. Programs that develop parental awareness, understanding, and pride in their students' achievement can be critical to black students' educational success.

SUMMARY

Although progress has been made, we must continue our efforts to increase black students' participation in a rigorous academic curricula. We must expect them to achieve because we know they can. Without our encouragement and the challenging academic preparation required for success in higher education, these students may never discover their talents and we, as a society, will not benefit from their achievements.

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Administrative and Organizational Arrangements and Considerations in the Effective Schools Movement

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There are hundreds of points that can and should be made regarding administrative and organizational considerations to strengthen the Effective Schools movement for improving the education of economically disadvantaged students. (We will limit our analysis to the economically disadvantaged segment of students, particularly those attending predominantly poverty schools in big cities.) However, we can summarize only a few of the most important of these points. We will do this under the following headings: *resources; organizational arrangements and grouping; testing; secondary schools; preparation of administrators;* and *planning for improvement.*

RESOURCES

Experience, common sense, and some research support the conclusion that significant additional resources generally are required to substantially improve the achievement of students attending poverty schools in big cities. Among the major categories in which expenditure increases generally are required are the following: class size reduction; supervisory and technical assistance personnel; instructional materials and supplies; and specialized personnel such as librarians and counselors.

Reduction of Class Size

Whether class size reduction results in improved achievement has been a long and tortuous controversy among educational

researchers. Without recapitulating the history of this controversy, we can report that there is now some consensus for the conclusion that substantial changes which reduce class size below the fifteen-to-twenty range can improve achievement, provided that such reductions are taken advantage of to modify and improve instructional practice. Beyond this common sense conclusion, several recent studies support the emerging and interrelated conclusions that the number of low-achieving students may be more important than the number of students *per se*, and that classes with a relatively high proportion of low-achievers must be small if the average teacher is to function effectively in this difficult environment (Levine, Levine, and Eubanks, 1985).

Supervisory and Technical Assistance Personnel

Substantially improving the achievement of vast numbers of disadvantaged students obviously will require major changes in instructional methods and materials. This in turn means that teachers at poverty schools must learn to function much more effectively than the average teacher has, or has been prepared to do, through pre-service and in-service education in the past.

Fortunately, the good news today is that improved instructional approaches have been developed that can result in large achievement gains among previously low-achievers, particularly as regards their performance on higher-order tasks such as comprehension in reading or other subjects and problem-solving in math. Professor David Pearson of the University of Illinois Center on Reading has characterized the advances in knowledge and technique that have occurred over the past ten years as a "comprehension revolution."

Unfortunately, the downside of this development is that teachers need considerable technical assistance and other forms of help if they are to use improved instructional approaches effectively. As summarized by MacGinitie and MacGinitie (1986), the situation today is basically that there is "essentially nothing in instructional materials or in teacher training [of the past] that helps the teacher learn what to do when the child does not understand."

Bruce Joyce, Beverly Showers, and others have shown that acquisition of new teaching skills and approaches requires many hours of demonstration, coaching, and practice, facilitated by highly trained specialists who provide support at the classroom level. Significant resources for staff development personnel, training materials, stipends, and other related expenditures are needed if teachers are to become more effective in working with disadvantaged students. In addition, teachers must be provided with much more

planning time than they usually have if they are to effectively implement contemporary approaches such as mastery learning or other versions of outcomes-based instruction (Levine, 1985).

Instructional Materials and Supplies

For a variety of reasons, significant additional expenditures for instructional materials and supplies are usually needed to improve achievement of low-achievers. Many of these students must learn at a faster rate than they have in the past, and this requires a wider-than-normal range of materials to be selected in accordance with students' changing levels of performance, their individual interests, and specific learning problems. In addition, effective utilization of new or different instructional approaches frequently requires additional resources such as textbooks, computers, and consumable materials.

Specialized Personnel

The need for additional specialized personnel is clearly evident at most poverty schools in big cities. For example, elementary librarians are needed to help ensure that regular classroom lessons are extended to and coordinated with independent learning and appropriate reinforcement in the library. Sufficient counselors are required to help students cope with the special problems they encounter in an inner-city environment and home-school coordinators are often required to ensure positive coordination of home and school influences. Other specialized personnel may be needed to help plan and conduct field trips, learning incentive programs, or other activities designed to motivate students and enrich their learning. In general, relatively large numbers of specialized personnel are needed at poverty schools as compared to middle-class or economically diverse schools because faculty at schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students are overloaded with a much higher-than-normal incidence of problems encountered in discharging their responsibilities.

It is true that substantially increasing expenditures at poverty schools does not and will not automatically result in improved instruction or student performance. Resources can be increased far beyond the average level within a school district, but little or no improvement will take place unless resources are used to bring about fundamental changes in instructional methods, organizational arrangements, and other aspects of education. In the 1960s and 1970s, large expenditures were used to reduce class size, provide more specialists, or introduce expensive instructional systems to

many poverty schools, but these expenditures did not result in basic improvements in instructional and organizational arrangements. Misuse of resources in the past, however, does not obviate the importance of the additional resources that will be required to implement change more effectively in the future.

It is also true that there are some poverty schools that already have an adequate level of resources. These schools are much more dependent on changes in the utilization of resources, rather than additional increases, if improvement in achievement is to occur. Some New York City schools, for example, have relatively large resources available through various local, state, and federal sources, and may not require additional money to bring about substantial improvement. Our experience has shown that such schools are much more the exception than the rule. Most poverty schools we have visited or know about require significant additional resources. However, claims that poverty schools require little or nothing more to improve achievement are sufficiently widespread—sometimes from people who should know better.

Organizational Arrangements and Grouping

During the past fifteen years we have devoted a considerable amount of time to studying, visiting, and otherwise learning about effective poverty schools where the average reading or math achievement is much higher than other similar schools. One of the most important distinguishing characteristics of these successful poverty schools is that they have unusually effective arrangements for teaching low-achieving students.

In some cases, such arrangements emphasize the provision of additional assistance to improve reading performance through tutoring before school, during lunch, or after school; utilization of teachers' aids; reductions of non-essential time in art, music, or other subjects; formation of smaller groups, within classes, for low-achievers; and other means (Sizemore, 1985). This type of approach requires that most or all teachers be unusually flexible, skilled, and hard-working in instructing low-achievers.

In other cases, arrangements at unusually effective poverty schools emphasize placement of the lowest-achievers in relatively homogeneous classes, organized and taught so as to accelerate learning. In essence, this involves placing the lowest-achieving students in the smallest classes and providing them with outstanding teachers and support staff who emphasize approaches that have been identified as important in working successfully with groups of low-achievers (such as relatively rapid pacing of instruction), and who

stress the improvement of each student's self-concept as a learner (Leinhardt and Pallay, 1982). One advantage of homogeneous grouping of the lowest-achieving students is that it can make the job of most teachers throughout the school much more manageable.

In still other cases, improved performance by the lowest-achievers has been attained through their placement in heterogeneous classes that emphasize individualized and small-group instruction. This approach can be successful as long as average class size in a school is relatively low; teachers have sufficient materials, skill, time, and help to provide meaningful individualization; and instructional procedures incorporate additional assistance for low-achievers through team learning or other means. Overall, this approach probably has the most potential for helping all students increase substantially in achievement; but it is relatively expensive and often fails because inadequate resources are provided to make it workable (Lindelow, 1983). Cohen (1986) has summarized some of the problems educators have encountered delivering instruction that emphasizes individualization in heterogeneous classrooms:

> This change... meant that teachers were going to need support in solving problems with the uncertain technology, support in learning how to work with aides. Because no one gave the teachers the help they needed, these innovations often degenerated...

This raises the old question of whether homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping is superior. We have seen both arrangements, as well as several intermediate mixtures, succeed in poverty schools. This leads us to conclude that, from some points of view, how well grouping is carried out may well be more important than whether it is homogeneous or heterogeneous.

In general, we believe that it is best to avoid or minimize homogeneous grouping to the extent possible, particularly in racially and socioeconomically mixed settings where such grouping may generate segregation within or across classrooms. However, in many poverty schools strictly heterogeneous organization may not be feasible, and some amount of homogeneous grouping may be more workable, provided that appropriate special assistance is available to the lowest-achievers. In the latter situation, we agree with a recent review of research (Slavin, 1986) in which the following "general principles for making ability grouping an effective practice at the elementary level":

> Students should remain in heterogeneous classes at most times, and be regrouped by ability only in subjects in which reducing heterogeneity is particularly important (for example, math and reading)... Grouping plans must reassess student placements frequently and allow for easy reassignments based on student progress.

Unfortunately, the general principles advocated by Slavin are rarely followed systematically in practice.

Beyond these principles we believe that some new terminology is desirable to partially circumvent the frequently emotional controversy between those who support and those who oppose homogeneous grouping. The best language we have heard for this purpose involves the concept of "levelling." Levelling advocates making a broad distinction between readers and non-readers; once this distinction is made, special assistance must be provided for poor readers and non-readers. A similar distinction probably should be made between students who are above and below some level of minimally adequate functioning in mathematics.

One particularly critical aspect of organizational arrangements for improving achievement at poverty schools in big cities involves coordination of the regular instructional program with compensatory resources such as Chapter I. The modal approach for providing compensatory education is to "pull" students from regular classes for special assistance. Unfortunately, many or most such arrangements are not working effectively because they 1) are poorly coordinated with regular instruction; 2) reduce the accountability of regular teachers; 3) create confusion and disruptive movement throughout the school day; and 4) otherwise detract from the effective delivery of instruction. New York, Kansas City, and some other urban districts have made large improvements by reducing or eliminating pullout. Many other districts must either emulate these examples or find ways to implement pullout more effectively if academic achievement is to be substantially improved at urban schools.

Testing

Administrators are also responsible for initiating and implementing evaluation policies and practices that will guide the Effective Schools movement in productive directions. Improvements in testing and evaluation are particularly required in order to counteract destructive tendencies toward overemphasis on low-level, rote learning at poverty schools in big cities.

Achievement patterns in many big cities indicate that much emphasis is being placed on improving students' performance in the "basic" rudimentary skills that are easiest to teach and test. Such skills are easiest for students to learn, help keep them occupied with worksheets and workbooks, and also tend to bolster their sense that they are accomplishing something in school. It is difficult for teachers and students to resist this tendency, particularly since emphasis on higher-order skills calls for more active learning methods that are

hard to implement in sizable classes with a high proportion of low-achievers. Data on achievement trends in big cities support the conclusion that much progress is being made in teaching low-level skills but deficiencies in higher-order skills are still severe (Levine and Eubanks, 1987). In Milwaukee, for example, the average fifth-grade capitalization and math computation scores are at the 55th percentile nationally; the average spelling score is at the 57th percentile; and the average punctuation score is at the 59th percentile. However, the average math problem-solving score is at the 47th percentile, and the average reading comprehension score is at the 40th percentile.

Similarly, in Kansas City, Missouri, average sixth-grade achievement at predominantly black, inner-city elementary schools is at the national average of 6.8 (grade-equivalent) in the mechanics of language (spelling, punctuation, capitalization); but it is at 6.1—far below the national average—in reading comprehension. This means that students who have been drilled for years in lower-order reading and math skills can now perform fairly well on standardized tests through the sixth or seventh grade; but many can only call out the words without understanding what they read, or are able to do simple arithmetic operations without understanding the math concepts or problem solving methods required for success in school or in a modern economy.

Worse, testing practices frequently reinforce destructive tendencies to overemphasize lower-order skills. State or district tests in some locations specify a large number of sub-skills that are supposed to constitute reading, but instruction in these sub-skills frequently only helps students select the correct multiple-choice response on a test (MacGinitie and MacGinitie, 1986; Harris and Cooper, 1985). When such tests are imposed as the standards for performance across a diverse set of schools, students in middle-class schools generally perform well and move quickly to instruction in more important higher-level skills; while students at poverty schools in the inner city get mired in a repetitive cycle of learning, forgetting, and re-learning narrow sub-skills.

As long as performance is assessed by the wrong criteria, it will be difficult to wean teachers and students from emphasis on rote learning. Testing can be an engine for improvement rather than a generator and reinforcer of a destructive emphasis on lower-order skills in inner-city schools. Among the viable options available to administrators, policy makers, and other school officials are 1) to emphasize components of standardized tests that deal with the relatively most important higher-order skills, or 2) to use tests (such

as Degrees of Reading Power) that are designed explicitly to assess performance on dimensions other than rote mastery of narrow sub-skills.

Secondary Schools

At the senior high and intermediate (i.e., junior high or middle school) levels, the conclusions regarding resources and organizational arrangements also apply. Problems in reforming secondary schools are more severe than those encountered at the elementary level and, therefore, workable solutions require even greater changes in traditional practice such as those enumerated below:

1. Urban secondary schools enrolling many low-achievers require fundamental structural change. Productive structural change can include such possibilities as the creation of "school-within-a-school" units; the establishment of "institutes" or centers that allow students to concentrate on studies in which they are particularly interested; and arrangements for teaching across subject areas, to emphasize common themes in English, social studies, math, science, and other subjects.

2. In nearly all urban secondary schools with which we are familiar, some change is required in the composition of the faculty in order to introduce more teachers who are both able and willing to work with low-achieving urban students.

3. To carry out major improvements in structure, staffing, and instructional approach, secondary schools generally require at least one support person for every nine or ten teachers. (This generalization holds for socioeconomically mixed as well as poverty schools.) Support staff can include a variety of positions: administrators, supervisors, counselors, sub-unit directors, program directors or coordinators, specialists in curriculum and/or instruction, staff development specialists, and technology specialists. Successful organizations in business and industry, health care, military services, and other fields typically have one support person/supervisor/ technical consultant for every eight to ten employees. It is hard to understand why many believe that schools, which have increasingly complex and difficult objectives to carry out, can function effectively with much smaller amounts of leadership and supervision.

Our comments and recommendations regarding reform of secondary education are at variance with the initiatives now being implemented for this purpose in many locations. Recently sum-

marized as involving a variety of efforts to "tighten administrative and instructional controls" without providing for fundamental improvement in the organization and operation of high schools, these so-called reforms essentially involve "relatively inexpensive" changes in supervision, testing, and management (Sedlak, *et al*, 1986). We concur that these initiatives usually "give the appearance of solving the problems without disturbing the schools" significantly.

PREPARATION OF ADMINISTRATORS

Recognition of the importance of principals and other administrators in creating more effective schools is almost universal. There also seems to be growing recognition that the task of bringing about real improvement in elementary and secondary schools is enormously difficult. Interesting debates can be carried on concerning the extent to which other faculty can or must provide leadership (in addition to or in place of the principal); differentials in the possibilities for providing leadership between the elementary and the secondary levels; the appropriate administrative sequence for emphasizing school climate, instruction, and evaluation; and other related matters. Nevertheless, nearly everyone agrees that outstanding administrators are required if instruction is to become significantly more effective, and that the general level of leadership must be much improved in the future.

Given these truisms, pre-service and in-service preparation of administrators must be substantially strengthened or the Effective Schools movement will probably thrash around without having a systematic national impact. Serious efforts to improve administrative leadership will necessarily include the following interrelated components:

—Paid internships at both the pre-service and in-service stages. (Yet, no supervisor should be assigned more than nine or ten interns at any one time.)

—Opportunities to gain first-hand familiarity with instructional arrangements, operational procedures, climate improvement efforts, and other aspects of education at unusually effective schools. Such familiarity with effective practices can be obtained through a combination of internships, mentor programs for new or potential administrators, collegial study arrangements through which administrators visit and analyze each other's schools, and other means.

Administrator preparation activities such as these are relatively expensive compared to the usual in-service and pre-service

activities. Thus, one may doubt whether serious wide-spread efforts will be launched to adequately improve the capabilities of public school administrators, even though training programs of the magnitude indicated are standard in many business and professional fields.

Emphasis on administrator preparation is particularly critical at this stage of the Effective Schools movement, due to growing recognition of the importance of organizational culture in improving achievement at poverty schools. Research increasingly indicates that the norms and attitudes shared by faculty are key considerations in determining whether meaningful change will occur and become institutionalized. Innovations in instructional technology and curriculum, without concomitant and supportive change in organizational culture, will not produce significant or lasting improvement.

At the same time, relatively little academic knowledge is available on how to change organizational culture in practice, and strictly academic knowledge of this kind does not necessarily affect the behavior of those who learn it. We do know, however, that improvement in organizational culture is one of the key contributions made by adminstrators in unusually effective schools, and that successful administrators are able to do this because they have developed successful "theories-in-use" that fit the particular circumstances at a given school. Administrators at unusually effective schools, in other words, have somehow learned how to make sense of the myriad of problems and opportunities that exist in their schools; through continuous strategic dialogues, they communicate a vision of improvement sufficiently powerful to change faculty motivation and organizational culture (Taylor, 1984, 1986).

Planning For Improvement

Successful implementation of systematic efforts to improve achievement at poverty schools depends on improvement in site-level planning to deliver instruction more effectively. General guidelines should be utilized to help schools and districts avoid some of the mistakes that have been common in various Effective Schools projects throughout the United States. Several guidelines to serve this purpose are provided below (adapted from Levine and Leibert, 1987).

1. *Do not overload schools, or allow them to overload themselves, as part of a public relations attempt to "demonstrate" that they are doing everything possible to improve achievement.*

In addition to limiting the number of objectives and components in a school plan, central office personnel should help school faculties

select relatively simple approaches for improving instruction. For example, it is known that students differ somewhat in preferred learning style, and school plans frequently specify that instruction be reformed to take account of learning style differences. If the approach specified is relatively simple and manageable, such as emphasizing an alternate mode of instruction for corrective instruction, most teachers probably can proceed to make instruction somewhat more effective for many students. If the solution selected is complicated, such as the design and re-design of learning environments with reference to myriad types of learning preferences, it will probably be ignored.

2. *Require that school personnel deal with strategic instructional issues as part of their plans for improvement.*

One implication of the preceding discussion is that planning guidelines and formats should be formulated with reference to key instructional issues, such as student grouping. If a school plan specifies that improvements be made in reading performance on standardized tests, the plan should provide information showing that problems and alternatives regarding grouping were considered in the context of reading instruction. Evidence should also be presented showing that reading skills and activities have been carefully selected and scheduled at the grade and classroom level to avoid emphasis on low-order skills.

3. *Assistance from the central office must be furnished primarily through technical support from persons, not paperwork.*

Resolution of different problems involving delivery of instruction cannot be achieved through forms describing components in an annual school plan, no matter how elaborate. To address these issues successfully, schools need many kinds of technical assistance from those persons who can assist in the development of agreements regarding priorities for change; who can identify obstacles to change; and who can work out solutions to complex problems within the particular school context.

We admit that it is cheaper and easier for central administrators to process reams of paper designated as "annual improvement plans" than it is to provide intensive technical assistance. However, we have seen too many instances in which assistance primarily has taken the form of processing paper to believe that this approach can make much difference.

4. *To the extent possible, plans as well as planning directives and formats should focus attention on the most common pitfalls in implementing a particular approach to improving instruction.*

This guideline is implicit in our previous recommendation that the central office should require schools to deal explicitly with problems they encounter in the grouping of students and other key instructional issues. Other pitfalls, such as mental and physical overload of teachers, should also be addressed.

Many districts now specify one or another mastery learning approach to improve instruction at the elementary level. Research as well as the experience of many educators indicate that there are predictable pitfalls that frequently detract from the success of these approaches. Anderson and Jones (1981), have identified some of these common flaws as follows: 1) lack of priorities among instructional objectives; 2) failure to organize objectives into well-sequenced units; 3) failure to orient and schedule students and instruction properly; 4) over-testing; and 5) unjustifiable decisions about performance standards. If planning does not help schools deal effectively with these problems, mastery learning tends to reinforce negative tendencies toward slow pacing of instruction emphasizing low-order learning.

At a broader level, common pitfalls in mastery learning include neglect of students' interests and enjoyment in learning, failure to coordinate mastery learning with other instructional approaches, failure to provide teachers with sufficient planning time and, equally pernicious, assigning teachers so many low-achieving students that teachers cannot give them enough learning time and teacher support. At this level of analysis, much of the problem in implementing mastery learning involves making it *manageable* and *feasible* for teachers—a consideration that should be explicitly addressed in formulating and carrying out individual school plans.

5. *Modify some of the language of the Effective Schools literature to reflect key instructional and organizational issues as part of the planning process.*

Although most of the school effectiveness studies have been correlational and, hence, severely limited in indicating specific actions to improve achievement, this research has helped identify some of the important manipulable characteristics and variables (Good and Brophy, 1986). To make this literature even more useful as a guide for school planning, we believe that some of these characteristics should be re-defined to focus partly on resolution of key instructional issues. For example, the characteristic which Edmonds (1982) described as "the principal's leadership and attention to the quality of instruction" might be re-written as: "The principal provides leadership in identifying and implementing solutions to central instructional issues such as pacing and grouping."

Similarly, the characteristic most commonly referred to as "high expectations" and described in more detail by Edmonds (1982) as "teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected" to attain "at least minimum mastery" might be rewritten as: "Assistance is provided and instructional arrangements and practices are structured so that all students are expected and required to meet minimum performance levels." In our experience, discussing teacher "expectations" often leads to a fruitless debate on whether teachers believe their students can learn. Improved terminology could help direct attention to questions such as how to provide assistance for slow learners through altering instructional arrangements, how to communicate high expectations through requirements for completion of classroom tasks, and how to implement rigorous yet realistic promotions policies.

CONCLUSION

Although the issues considered in this paper necessarily touch on curriculum and teaching, they are first and foremost the province and responsibility of school administrators. Organizational arrangements at the school level; policies and practices regarding school structure and staffing; and utilization and availability of resources are determined to a significant degree by administrators at various levels ranging from the school site to the central office.

Whenever or wherever adequate resources are not available to carry out fundamental instructional reform, acquisition of additional resources must be the primary priority for administrators and policy makers at all levels. Whenever or wherever adequate resources are available, adminstrators are responsible for revising organizational arrangements to ensure effective use, even though such revisions may result in conflict and opposition from some faculty members, teacher organizations, or other sources. What administrators must particularly avoid and oppose are the schemes being advanced by state government officials and legislators, local boards of education, bureaucrats, and others who, in the absence of needed fundamental changes, propose to improve achievement by simply "tightening up" on standards or testing the minimal competence of disadvantaged students. Improved performance for these students ultimately depends on the availability of adequate resources together with fundamental changes and improvements in the ways they are currently used.

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Educating Black Children: An Equity-Based Model

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In 1979 Ronald Edmonds stated, "We know all we need to know to educate all children whose education is of importance to us." Yet, too many black students find themselves at the lower end of the educational competence continuum. Reasons for this placement vary. Too often, when studying conditions in education, we examine the "victim" and not the institution. Analyzing the motives of education, in addition to analyzing the clients, will give balance to a perplexing situation. By 1995, it has been estimated that over 40 percent of the students in U. S. schools will be black or Hispanic (National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., 1984). Therefore, the education of black students has become a critical issue and challenge.

Horace Mann Bond saw education as performing two functions: the achievement of literacy, and personal and community improvement. Together, these functions made education the vehicle for effecting social change. He viewed the public school system as the "accepted instrument to realize the ideal of the equal creation of all human beings," but he was realistic enough to know that the schoolroom was "one of many places where human intelligence was transmitted." He understood the relationship between schools and society and felt that schools should not attempt to work in a vacuum. Yet, he said, "the school as presently constituted cannot be expected to do everything...but it can do much" (Fultz, 1985).

Children develop inner maps of the social world and of their future place as adults in it. These maps become powerful determinants of their aspirations and self-images. Self-concept, an individual's conception of self, worth, identity, and abilities, can be positive or negative. As students become more competent in the basic skills, a concomitant growth is seen in self-concept. Students

with healthy self-concepts are more self-reliant, more willing to approach new learning situations, and basically feel in control of their lives. Students with negative self-concepts develop self-doubt and avoid intellectual activities. Without structural changes, education and efforts to equalize opportunity can, at best, only change the cast of characters who occupy preexisting positions on the top and on the bottom (de Lone, 1977). One way to help equalize opportunities is to provide an equity-based education.

AN EQUITY-BASED MODEL

Effective education provides for equity and excellence. Equity demands the development of an educational program that will benefit the least advantaged children in the schools. Equity seeks excellence for all students. Children from poor families should achieve as high a level of proficiency as students from middle-income families.

The following four-dimensional model, developed by The Program for Educational Opportunity at the University of Michigan, has been used to assess the state of equity in school districts and educational programs across the nation (Moody, 1970). The model offers a schema for examining options and interventions that might help to improve education. Each dimension has judicial and educational foundations. Equitable opportunities exist in a district if all four dimensions are fully developed.

Prior to the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, black youngsters were denied access to many schools and programs. Equity was not an issue at all. When schools were legally desegregated, the *Access* dimension was addressed but the other three dimensions—*Process, Achievement,* and *Transfer*—were unaffected.

The utilization of this four-dimensional model of an equity-based education facilitates an accurate and objective assessment of the status of equity in schools and schooling. The dimensions of the model are applicable whether we are analyzing education at the K-12 or higher education levels.

A great deal of energy and effort have been expended to assure that black students gain access to schools, classes, programs, and various activities and resources within schools. In fact, the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* suit was brought about to ensure that blacks had access to public school resources. It is clear when examining data of black student enrollment where the unit of analysis is the district that black students do not have access to the 15,000-plus school districts. They are concentrated in a very small percentage of those districts. If we look at black student enrollment by states

or regions, the same pattern of lack of access for blacks becomes apparent. The view is no different when we examine black enrollment data using the classroom as our unit of analysis. Blacks are underrepresented in advanced placement, college preparatory, and gifted and talented classes. They are overrepresented in the Educable Mentally Handicapped classes within special education programs.

The *Process* dimension is a very critical aspect of schooling because it is where many black students are lost or forced out of the system. It is the junction in schooling where, too often, black students do not receive fair, equitable, or humane treatment. An illustrative example of this dimension is the analysis of the disproportionate representation of black students in the discipline system.

The Project for the Fair Administration of Student Discipline (under my direction at the University of Michigan) found that there were very different reactions to the same type of behavior of different students depending on the race and gender of the students. The kinds of sanctions meted out were also dependent on race and gender. Often the punishment is more severe for the same offense if committed by a black student.

The Process dimension is not restricted to student treatment but it is also a measure of staff and parent treatment. Are black staff and black parents made to feel that they are intruding in other people's schools? Are they made to feel that "it wasn't like that" before they came to the school or the district? These kinds of attitudes can lead to force-out and/or drop-out of students, staff, and parents.

Far too often we hear educators, politicians, school board members, and other adults saying that they want to close the achievement gap between black and non-black students; however, we must stop to seriously question if this is, in fact, their real desire. The *Achievement* dimension is an important phase in the teaching-learning process. One of the most critical variables in student achievement is expectation. What expectation do teachers, parents, and students have for black student achievement?

The premise on which Edmonds based his Effective Schools research was that "all students can learn." There is abundant research literature documenting the fact that the expectations we have for students determine the quality and quantity of interaction that take place between teachers and students in the teaching-learning process.

The fourth dimension, *Transfer,* is so crucial to the educational process, yet we pay little attention to it as an integral part of schooling. What is perceived as the return on one's educational investment greatly determines how doggedly the other three dimensions

of the model will be pursued by that individual and other similarly situated individuals.

It is difficult to convince black students that this is a system of meritocracy when they see that a high school diploma or college degree does not necessarily provide them with jobs that yield equal pay, power, privilege, and prestige. This dimension is the phase of the educational process where black students should be taught the skills of networking, mentoring, and sponsorship. They must learn that the name of the game in this country is sponsored mobility, not purely contest mobility. If they are to make it through all four of the dimensions of the model they must also be taught to understand that there is nothing immoral, illicit, or illegal about black people being mentors and sponsors to each other.

Schools have a responsibility to assist all students, but particularly black students, with all four phases of this equity-based model. Far too often schools feel as if they have carried out their obligations in the educational process if they have addressed only part of this model.

The process of moving from segregation to integration is very complex. In order to erase discriminatory practices in education, the process, achievement, and transfer dimensions have to be developed and put into place. (See Figure 1.)

Very few programs address all aspects of an equity-based education. Therefore, no "quick fix" is available. What educators may need to do is to examine interventions, determine which dimension is addressed, and investigate other programs or interventions to help strengthen the other dimensions. (See Figure 2.) Some programs affect several dimensions, as the following descriptions demonstrate.

EQUITY PROGRAMS

Effective School Research

Edmonds (1979) searched for schools where poor and black children were achieving at the same level as middle-income children. His research identified five correlates that one would find in schools where poor and black students were achieving minimal mastery of basic skills. He found that those schools shared the following characteristics:

1. A principal who is a strong instructional leader.
2. An atmosphere that is orderly without being rigid or oppressive.
3. A climate of high expectations in which no children are permitted to fall below minimal levels.

Figure 1

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTORS	INDICATORS
ACCESS	Exists to the extent that enrollment in a school, program, or particular class is not determined in such a way that minority-group children are adversely affected. Enrollment in schools, classes, and programs should reflect district-wide enrollment. For example, black students should not be over-represented in remedial classes and under-represented in gifted programs.	Programs Gifted/Talented Vocational/Technical College Preparatory Remedial Courses Racially-Balanced Schools Special Education
PROCESS	Policies and practices ensure the fair treatment of minority group staff, students, and parents. Students are treated fairly and humanely by disciplinary procedures and in their day-to-day interactions with staff. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's educational experiences. Staff are not discriminated against in promotions, or in teaching or duty assignments. Instruction is culturally congruent. Staff development opportunities are available.	Discipline Policy Community & Parental Involvement Instructional and Curriculum Issues School Facilities Personnel Assignments
ACHIEVEMENT	Educational outcomes cannot be predicted by the race of the children participating in the process. The basic premise underlying this dimension is that all students can learn the next level beyond that which she/he already knows. Achievement is reflected in test scores, grades, graduation rates, drop-out rates, awards, rewards, and recognition.	Promotion and Retention Policies Achievement Tests Graduation Rates Dropout Rates Awards Honor Society Honor Roll Leadership Positions
TRANSFER	Students can link their educational experience to additional education or employment. There is tangible evidence that minority group students are linked to opportunities that are not inferior to white students. It is ultimately reflected in the ability of minority group students to acquire jobs that will provide them with equal pay, power, privilege, and prestige.	Counseling Career Education Postsecondary Enrollment Information Distributed to Students: College Scholarship Financial Aid Networking and Mentoring

4. An emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in a well-prepared classroom where students spend most of their time on tasks.
5. A means of frequent monitoring of pupil progress.

Cognitive Style Research

Researchers in cognitive psychology have approached the task of improving educational success by examining Afro-American cognitive style. Shade (1982) discusses the adaptational/survival premise that suggests that "Afro-Americans developed a parallel culture in response to their isolation through discrimination, slavery, and ghetto-ization. Using the various elements of African cultural patterns they were able to retain, while acquiring others from the Europeans with whom they had contact, Afro-Americans developed an approach to life that assisted in their survival." This theory also maintains that Afro-Americans developed a culturally specific method of organizing and processing information. While this method was effective in social situations, Cohen and others have concluded that this culturally specific strategy differs from the one that is required for success in the typical educational setting (Shade, 1982).

Proponents of this thesis found that many Afro-Americans' cognitive strategies are described as holistic, intuitive, and more than that, very person-oriented. However, a review of the literature suggests that successful functioning within the current school context requires the cognitive strategies that are described as sequential, analytical, or object-oriented (Shade, 1982).

Hollins (1986) proposes that the following conditions should be present in schools to help black students achieve:

1. The process and content of the learning should be related in a meaningful way and should be familiar to the learner.
2. The content should be communicated in a way that is acceptable and comprehensible to the learner.
3. The learner should be provided adequate time to access, process, and apply the content.
4. An effective environment ought to be such that the learner feels comfort and support so that he/she might take the risks necessary for learning.

TESA (Teacher Expectation and Student Achievement)

A staff development program, TESA identifies fifteen interactions that are motivating and supportive with all students. The

intended result is the accelerated academic growth of every student in the classroom, especially those perceived as lower-achieving ones. Teachers are trained to provide equitable response opportunities, to ask higher-level questions, to use prompts and wait time, to show interest in students' work, and to provide feedback when students respond to questions (Moody, 1986).

Effective Instruction Models

These are generally direct-instruction models. Students are instructed in ways that maximize time on tasks. Questions are directed at random; students are provided feedback and are actively involved in the lesson. Teachers are taught how to formulate and teach an objective; to monitor pupils; to adjust their teaching; and to use principles of learning that promote motivation, retention, and the desired rate and degree of learning (Moody, 1986).

Testwiseness Strategies

Students are provided with opportunities and practice that will help them increase their scores on college admissions tests (Moody, 1986).

Minority Engineering Programs

These programs generally start in middle or senior high school. Students are provided opportunities to have mentors; to receive tutoring, jobs, and scholarships; and to make on-site visits to better understand what engineers do (Moody, 1986).

INROADS

This program is designed to prepare talented minority youth for professional careers in business and engineering. Preparation involves recruitment, counseling, tutoring, professional training, academic instruction, and involvement in community service (Moody, 1986).

Preschool Programs

Early childhood programs such as Headstart and preschool were found to have a great impact on achievement and transfer. Children with preschool experience have a greater commitment to school. They spend more time on homework and have a more positive self-concept. The Perry School Project reported that its students' retention and employment rates were higher than those students without preschool experience (Moody, 1986).

Figure 2

PROGRAM	ACCESS	PROCESS	ACHIEVEMENT	TRANSFER
Effective Schools Research		X	X	
Cultural Congruence		X	X	
TESA		X	X	
Effective Instruction		X	X	
Testwiseness Strategies			X	X
Minority Engineering Programs	X		X	X
INROADS	X	X	X	X
Preschool Programs	X	X	X	X
Gifted/Talented Programs	X	X	X	X
Student Team Learning (Cooperative Learning)	X	X	X	X
Computer Instruction	X		X	X
Student Discipline/Management Services		X		
National Achievement Scholarship Programs	X	X	X	X

CONCLUSION

No child starts kindergarten wanting to become a failure. To help prevent failure, we must not write children off as helpless casualties. Well-researched instructional methods, strategies, and tools are now available. But they cannot replace a caring teacher who will help students develop a sense of personal responsibility. Because success is such a powerful motivator, effective teachers maintain a fast pace and students experience a high rate of success. Students have a better self-concept when their existing reading abilities are emphasized rather than frequent references to their errors or inadequacies. The student's self-concept is related to his/her ownership in the involvement of the reading lessons (Michigan Reading Association, 1985). Comprehension depends upon a learner's prior knowledge. When new learning is linked to what the learner already knows, success is more likely. This makes the essential principle of all good teaching—to estimate where each student is and build on that base—doubly important (Anderson, 1984).

Educational deficits are cumulative. In fact, for some students, the longer they stay in school, the further behind they become. Levels of educational attainment have improved, but many black students who remain in school find themselves tracked into less challenging curricular opportunities that do not prepare them for the jobs of the future. Uninspiring drill and practice workbooks and ditto sheets do not help to close the "achievement gap". Teachers

found to be most effective with black children incorporated black students' experiences and interests into the instruction, and allowed them to foster cooperative efforts and use materials that incorporated cultural characteristics (Hollins, 1986).

Until we address the fact that race, gender, and class are better predictors of employment and income than education, many students who see the contradiction will continue to fail and leave our schools. The motives for education must be changed in order to maximize the number of black students reaching their full potential. Again, as Edmonds said, "We already know enough to educate all children whose education is of importance to us." We can change educational and social practices so that the inner maps that black students have will lead to large futures, not small ones (deLone, 1977).

We must make sure that all persons involved in the schooling process view the education of black students as important. Education is not to be used as a means of sorting and sifting students, but as a tool to assist them in reaching their full potential.

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Section II:

Teaching and Learning in the Classroom

Good teachers make a difference. No matter how wise and well-meaning a district's established policy may be, it is doomed to failure without successful implementation at the classroom level. It is in the classroom where parents and students expect "delivery" to take place and, when it does not, the system fails for everyone involved. Poussaint reviews the dismal picture painted by recent nationwide assessments of how black children are progressing. He ends optimistically with a description of a literacy program that has been successful in black schools. Brooks speaks from her experience as a teacher, as she outlines the characteristics of superior teachers who empower students and themselves. Her faith in teachers and in what they can accomplish creates an inspiring message. Finally, Slavin describes cooperative learning as an instructional model proven successful in the education of black students.

It Ain't No Consolation

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If it is any consolation, it appears that American education is short-changing just about everyone—rich and poor, urban and suburban, advantaged and disadvantaged, black and every other color. Unfortunately, and this is the dilemma, black students are substantially behind a student population that is, as a whole, far behind where current studies say it needs to be.

If the goal is only to reach a national average, black kids will be in the no-win situation of trying to play catch-up. Playing catch-up will not put black students where the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy says all students need to be to make it in the 21st century. According to this study, students need to be adept at thinking for themselves, actively applying ideas to problems. They need to have the tools to think independently and in concert with others, to render crictical judgment, and to contribute constructively to many enterprises. Therefore, schools must graduate "the vast majority of their students with achievement levels long thought possible for only the privileged few." The Carnegie study concludes that if we use existing fill-in-the-blanks, standardized tests to measure "old goals of basic competence," when the goal should be to instill the ability to reason, then we have "chosen to face backwards when it is essential that we face forward" (Carnegie Corporation, 1986).

A National Perspective

This is the sorry picture we see when we face forward. Based on 90,000 responses to writing tasks by 55,000 students, National Assessment of Educational Progress/Educational Testing Service (1986) concludes that "students at all grade levels are deficient in higher-order thinking skills." The students cannot write because they cannot think. Responses to persuasive writing tasks were "disorganized or unelaborated." The report continues, "Rather than

using coherent arguments or explanations, far too many students resorted to simple lists or catalogs of related information."

On the least complex persuasive writing task, only 28.1 percent of all eleventh-graders were able to respond at an adequate or better level. On the most complex task, only 15.1 percent of all eleventh-graders wrote an adequate or better response. Analytic writing results were even poorer. On the most complex analytic task, only 10.1 percent of all eleventh-graders wrote adequate or better responses.

What we find, then, is that black students are lagging behind a population that is by contemporary measures of literacy far behind current requirements. Traditionally, literacy was defined as "the ability to derive surface understanding from written materials and to express similar understanding in writing." Today it is "the ability to reason effectively about what one reads and writes in order to extend one's understanding of ideas expressed (NAEP/ETS, 1987).

Two factors need to be examined: 1) the relative position of black students vis-à-vis their white counterparts as measured by SAT scores and NAEP results and 2) the socioeconomic element in these differences.

Black students are behind white students in achievement by grade four, and this difference in achievement for most black students is never made up, not even by those who attend college. Mean verbal SAT scores of black students are 77.1 percent of white college-going students, or 346 versus 449. Data developed by NAEP (1987) reveal a persistent pattern at grades four, eight, and eleven of lower black than white reading proficiency and writing achievement. This pattern can be shown by expressing black scores as a percent of white scores.

TABLE 1
Reading Proficiency and Writing Achievement

	Black % of White Scores		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
Average Reading Proficiency	86.7	90.3	90.5
Average Writing Achievement	84.7	88.2	89.3

Source: *Learning to be Literate in America—Reading, Writing, and Reasoning.* NAEP/ETS (Princeton, 1987).

In *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults* (1986), NAEP also measured reading and reasoning ability for selected tasks at or above successive points on a "document" scale of 0-500. The results show

that, at the simplest level of 150 on the scale, 99.9 percent of whites and 98.6 percent of blacks could perform the task adequately—signing their name in the right place. At 350 on the scale, at a level of difficulty of a task similar to using a bus schedule to select an appropriate bus for given departures and arrivals, 24.3 percent of white and 2.5 percent of black young people could perform adequately. At a 375 level of difficulty, 10.5 percent of white youths and 0.9 percent of black youths could perform adequately.

If we look at performance in terms of years of education completed by those being tested, we see another picture. At the 350 level of difficulty noted above for the task involving the use of the bus schedule, the results were: 0–8 years of education, 0.7 percent completed the task adequately; two- or four-year college degrees or more, 40.7 percent performed the task adequately. These results begin to demonstrate the impact of socioeconomic status on performance.

A clearer example is based on comparisons derived from NAEP data on writing achievement. On a 0–400 scale, the average writing achievement for students in grades four, eight, and eleven shows two patterns. One pattern emerges for student scores grouped three different ways: black, or disadvantaged-urban, or students of parents who did not complete high school. The other pattern is for student scores grouped by these classifications: white, advantaged-urban, or students of parents with post-high school education.

Writing Achievement

Black	175	199	White
Disadvantaged Urban	177	206	Advantaged Urban
Parents: No High School Diploma	177	202	Parents: Post-High School Education

Clearly, a black student who was either advantaged-urban or had well-educated parents would show results that relate to relatively high socioeconomic status, as Table 2 below illustrates.

The educational consequences of low socioeconomic status are also demonstrated in the differences between the SAT scores of students coming from low-income and high-income families. The ascending order of SAT verbal scores coincides with increasing parental income, from 350 (under $6,000) to 465 (over $50,000) (The College Board, 1986).

TABLE 2
Average Writing Achievement by Race, Community Status, and Parents' Education: Grades 4, 8, and 11

	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
Race			
(1) Black	138	186	200
(2) White	163	211	224
(1) as % of (2)	84.7	88.2	89.3
Community			
(3) Disadvantaged-Urban	142	188	201
(4) Advantaged-Urban	170	221	228
(3) as % of (4)	83.5	85.1	88.2
Parents' Education			
(5) No High School Diploma	143	189	199
(6) Post-High School	166	213	227
(5) as % of (6)	86.1	88.7	87.7

(Source: *The Writing Report Card.* NAEP/ETS (Princeton, 1986).

The median parental income of all students taking SATs in 1985 was $32,200. For white students, median parental income was $34,700; for black students, it was less than half of this, $17,100. Of all black students taking SATs, 52.8 percent showed parental income of $17,999 or less, contrasting with 15.8 percent for white students. At the other end of the scale, only 23.3 percent of black students showed parental incomes of $30,000 or more, in contrast to 60.4 percent for white students. The implications for data on black and white scores that do not acknowledge the economic factor are obvious.

Income is clearly a great equalizer. Moving from the bottom to the top of the parental income scale, SAT verbal scores (in the 50th percentile) of black students, taken as a percent of white scores, jump from 71.8 percent to 87.2 percent as parental income levels rise. The rate of closure is about one percent for every $2,850, as illustrated below (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Black Students SAT Verbal Scores as a Percent of White Student Scores By Parental Income Levels

Under $6,000	6,000–11,999	12,000–17,999	18,000–23,999	24,000–29,999	30,000–39,999	40,000–49,999	50,000 or over
71.8%	73.8%	77.1%	79.3%	80.9%	82.1%	84.0%	87.2%

How does one respond to this? According to the Select Committee on the Education of Black Youth (Wilberforce, 1986): "Sons and daughters of the rich perform on the whole better than sons and daughters of the poor. There are a lot of poor blacks. But since we can't wait for the poor to become rich, we had best get on with the educational job." Education will not make you rich, but it sure improves the odds.

CENTRAL CONSIDERATIONS

A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century; The Writing Report Card, Literacy; Profiles of America's Young Adults; and *Learning To Be Literate in America—Reading, Writing, and Reasoning* are the latest in a continuing flow of studies and reports dealing with related economic and educational considerations. Earlier reports in a similar vein include *The Educationally Disadvantaged: A National Crisis,* a working paper by Public/Private Ventures; *Employment Policies: Looking to the Year 2000,* by the National Alliance of Business; and *Investing In Our Children—Business and the Public Schools,* a statement by the Committee for Economic Development.

All these reports make four main points:

1. The United States is losing its competitive edge in a changing world economy.

2. As the Japanese look over their shoulders at the Koreans and we look over our shoulders at the Japanese, we must realize that education is the foundation of economic growth and that this country must reach for a level of literacy never reached before.

3. The entire work force must be highly productive because of changing demographics: In 1950, 17 workers paid the benefits of each retired person, but in 1992, the ratio will be three workers for each retired person. One out of three of these workers will be a minority person.

4. To match the drastic change needed in our economy, the educational system does not need repairing; it must be rebuilt. The command of language—reading, writing, and reasoning—is the key.

What will this mean for black youth? Does it mean that whatever the changes in education, blacks will still be playing catch-up? Does it mean that the majority of blacks will be responding to the kind of need defined by David Kerns, chairman and chief executive officer

of Xerox, who implies continued servitude at the low end: "If current demographic and economic trends continue, American business will have to hire a million new workers a year who can't read, write, or count. Teaching them how and absorbing the lost productivity while they're learning will cost industry $25 billion a year for as long as it takes—and nobody seems to know how long that will be" (NAEP/ETS, 1987). Or will there be a different objective?

Rather than play catch-up, can black students leap ahead?

What is the starting point for inner-city and many other black youth? I wrote the following statement in 1970 for the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The message may be even more pertinent now, because an increasingly complex society and economy seems to be placing success further and further beyond the reach of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

> The self-hatred that develops early in the life of the minority child has devastating psychological effects on his development. Sometimes self-hatred can take on very subtle manifestations. For instance, competition, which may bring success, may also bring failure. Thus the efforts which may bring success to oppressed students are often not made even when the opportunity exists. This occurs for two reasons: First, the anxiety that accompanies growth and change is avoided if a new failure is not risked; therefore, a try is not made. Second, the steady state of failure represented by nonachievement is what many minority group persons have come to know and expect. Nonachievement is familiar, and safer. Furthermore, for minorities, especially black people, it has often meant survival to deny the possession of intelligence, thoughts, and feelings. This makes it difficult to move from a position of passivity to one of activity, and to acknowledge heretofore forbidden feelings and behavior as now safe, legitimate, and acceptable. Frequently, such internal feelings may lead to an overwhelming discomfort which then results in a student's withdrawal and truancy. Other youngsters may develop an attitude of "what's the use" or feel that they don't have a "right" to success. Still others adopt an attitude of hostility and defiance against a system that appears to despise them.

More often than not, these angry, alienated, failing students are in inner-city schools that are composed largely of similar students. This situation produces another degree of complication: schools that are "communities of failure." Students expect to fail, teachers treat them as likely failures by what they teach and how they teach, and school principals focus their energy more on law and order than on learning. At the end of the school day, students return to homes that, more often than not, represent another dimension of "failure." As sociologists view the scene, it is one in which the societal norms are shaped by the presumption of failure, in school and out. School is largely a place to be with friends and for athletics—not a place for learning. What is remarkable and certainly deserves more study

is why and how some students become the exceptions, triumphing over circumstance and achieving substantial measures of success in school, college, and beyond.

Many, but certainly not all, of these "communities of failure" are populated by black students, taught by predominantly black teachers, run by black principals, overseen by black superintendents, and guided by predominantly black school boards. Other, predominantly white schools in low socioeconomic areas show much the same pattern. Black leadership has a unique opportunity and special obligation to deliver results for black and other students.

Reports that are written to explain disastrous student performance and the slow rate of improvement tend to focus on the litany of society's failures—poverty, drugs, teenage pregnancy—but very seldom on the guts of the problem. Students are failing in school because they are not learning. We have lost sight of several basic truths:

1. In the inner-city society, school represents the primary opportunity to shape the outcomes of young people.

2. Of all the factors that influence failure, dropping-out, expectations and self-esteem of students, learning is by far the most profound.

3. The key to learning is language because language is our means of thinking and reasoning.

4. Students must have command of language to cross the threshold of learning, to succeed in education and beyond.

And what do we do in so many instances for our communities of failure? We use the same textbooks, the same classroom methods, and the same standardized tests that have cultivated failure for low socioeconomic groups over the years. We exhort our students to do better, to have pride, to be somebody. We spend millions on remediation. We remediate some kids starting in the third grade, and we remediate them right into college, where they can be reminded once again of their deficiencies by being placed in remedial English. And we say we are succeeding if students do just a little better on standardized tests that at best measure surface literacy. We look at the higher scores of higher income students, and that becomes our goal.

What we should acknowledge is an educational system shaped for white middle- and upper-class kids, which appears to work for them because these kids bring enough from home to gloss over what

Carnegie explains are the inadequacies of what schools deliver. On the surface the standardized tests confirm that white middle-class kids are doing OK. And the SAT scores confirm that all is not too bad with white America. These same standardized tests and SATs also show that blacks are not doing OK.

But, hold the train. Carnegie and NAEP have blown the whistle. In *The Writing Report Card* (1986), NAEP says, "One of the most distressing findings is the continuing difficulty older students have explaining and defending their ideas. In *Learning to Be Literate* (1987), NAEP concludes, "Only small percentages of children and young adults can reason effectively about what they are reading or writing. The conclusion, as noted earlier, is that students at all grade levels are deficient in higher order thinking skills.

The Carnegie Forum response to this gross deficiency in student performance is clear enough: "We do not believe the educational system needs repairing; we believe it must be rebuilt to match the drastic changes needed..." At the core of this is the need to change the way students learn, the way teachers teach, and how they feel about themselves.

The Need for Success

If black students are to succeed, they must experience success. If inner-city schools are to be transformed from communities of failure into centers of learning, the vast majority of the school community—students, teachers, and administrators—must share in the experience of success before they can begin to believe in it and expect it. How can this be achieved?

We have learned that there are certain basic principles of curriculum content and method, as well as strategies fundamental for their implementation, that are capable of yielding success on a significant scale. One example of an approach worth examining, because it incorporates several ingredients that relate to successful outcomes, is the product of black initiative and black scholarship. In 1978 Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, who is now president of Central State University, recognized the problem of student failure and its relationship to the command of language in terms that have been expressed by Ernest Boyer and in many national reports: that language is far more than proficiency in the mechanics of grammar and punctuation; that language competence is thinking critically and independently, expressing one's thoughts in language appropriate to a given situation, appreciating and mastering the power of language to communicate ideas, stir emotions, interact with others, and effect change. Dr. Thomas set in motion steps that led to the creation of the program, *Foundations for Learning: Language.*

An Instructive Example

The Foundations program is an instructive example because it deals with several critical facets of the problem we are examining: the content and method of learning; the professional redevelopment of teachers; strategies for implementation and change; and holistic assessment of student progress. It incorporates the findings of linguistics research and current thinking as to curriculum requirements: an integrated, content and process-based approach to all language domains—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as aspects of reasoning, problem solving, and critical thinking; employment of the vast fund of experience and knowledge students bring to the classroom, offering them a share of control over their own learning environment; use of collaborative learning to provide feedback and the rewards of communication—speaking, being listened to, being understood—and, through work in small groups, to provide the basis for socialization and developing the art of constructive criticism. The objective is to make language a personal tool for learning, persuasion, and leadership—all elements of self-realization and growth. Several academic terms apply to the approach: metacognitive awareness—understanding why and how you are learning something; schema theory—developing background knowledge in advance of reading and writing; strategies for the "intelligent novice"—context clues in reading, criteria for self-evaluation in writing; active learning—active involvement in and responsibility for learning; reading and writing as holistic and recursive processes. In this environment, the teacher is cast in the role of professional manager who is expected to make decisions that shape the direction and chemistry of the classrooms.

A recent report (1986) by twenty language arts teachers at John Hope Community Academy, a middle school on Chicago's south side, offers some evidence that the multifaceted approach does yield success on a scale that is proportional to the problem. The Foundations students at Hope were tracked over a two-year period. Based on holistically scored pre- and post-assessment essays, the students showed significant gains in writing and critical-thinking skills. The principle results can be summarized as follows: median scores rose 42.1 percent; the number of students with passing scores rose from 6.8 percent of the entering seventh-grade class to 52.5 percent of the total eighth-grade class; and the percentage of students with very low scores declined from 57.5 percent to 10.6 percent of the class.

John Hope teachers explained that they dealt with learning "as a collaborative process of inquiry and discovery in which the in-

dividual student is the main agent responsible for his or her own learning." They confirm the relationship between the scope of success and the effect on the school community.

> Between the beginning of the seventh-grade and the end of the eighth-grade, over 90 percent of our Foundations students shared in language learning gains, and 65 percent made very great gains—from failing to passing scores and from low or average scores to very high scores. This sets a new tone for the expectations and aspirations of both students and teachers.
>
> The lesson for us is that the learning environment changes profoundly when it is moved and shaped by the excitement of student learning, when this excitement is shared very broadly, and when a large majority of students make very great gains. When teachers see themselves as agents of such changes they are motivated to reach further in the new environment for learning.

A similar pattern of results among all Foundations users would appear to confirm the validity of the principles on which the program is based. In their paper for the Annual Conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association (1987), Dr. Arthur E. Thomas and Dr. Susan Sardy reported these results:

> The efficacy of the type of approach that Foundations represents is substantiated by pre- and post-test assessment data for over 7500 inner-city students in grades seven through twelve, in 28 schools in nine cities—Chicago, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Inglewood (California), New York, Cleveland, East Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and Detroit.
>
> Over an average period of 6.2 months in the Foundations program, the 7,526 students showed these gains: a pre- to post-test median score gain of 18 percent; the number of students with passing scores doubled; the number of students with high scores—above 9.0 in the 2.0 to 12.0 range—went up 187.3 percent; and possibly most important, the number of students with low scores of 5.0 or less on the pre-test was more than halved, showing a decline of 56.1 percent. The increase in high scores and the decrease in low scores demonstrated that both low and high achievers gained in the Foundations program. The entire performance curve shifted to the right. This experience was shared by all schools studied.

Opportunity for Leadership

Gains of the magnitude shown can do much to erode the past sense of failure of both students and teachers and replace it with belief in one's ability to teach and to learn—to read, write, and think critically. The reason these results are so positive is because a curriculum of this type touches on a very basic human truth, one particularly important to blacks: that the way to turn from a corrosive self-image of failure to one of success is through the knowledge that we can control our lives. We can assert ourselves in our surroundings, determine our goals for ourselves, and accomplish something,

rather than passively accepting the role of victim. We can overcome, and if we don't know, we can *learn*.

When you know there are ways to leap ahead, it "ain't no consolation" to be moving ahead and still playing catch-up. We have seen what black leadership can do when it is prepared to rebuild rather than repair.

Is there any reason why black educators who, after all, now head school systems in many of the largest urban centers in the country, should not lead the parade and show the whole country how to become literate? I believe we can be the leaders.

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Teachers: Potent Forces in the Learning Lives of Black Children

Charlotte Kendrick Brooks, *Brooks Associates, Inc.*

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Carter G. Woodson began it in 1933 with *Mis-Education of the Negro.* He knew then, as we know now, that something was wrong. In the 1960s there was a great surge of interest in the education of blacks. Some of the interest was honest and was sparked by black educators, black organizations, and some sincere "others," alarmed by the revelations of desegregation of the schools. Some was false and was inspired by the smell of money, to be spent belatedly and only in part upon the black learners so long ignored; most to be pocketed by greedy grantseekers and businesses. There were white teachers, who, after one-year stints in black schools, became instant experts, published books, and have been famous for twenty years because of their "great knowledge" about blacks.

Researchers ground out studies; publishers rushed into print with "color-them-brown" textbooks and other materials; governments instituted programs, and test-makers devised, publicized, and sold many tests—from which they made millions of dollars—that did little or nothing to help teachers do a better job of teaching black learners. They only showed how poorly black students did on those tests—devised with no consideration of their language and culture—in comparison with affluent whites. True, when black educators were brought into the publishing process, textbooks did improve. This must continue.

Unfortunately, many of the measures instituted in the past twenty years have been destructive both to black learners and to their teachers. However, instead of dwelling on negative aspects

of black education, I propose to discuss what good research, practical teaching experience, and a body of knowledge about black learners have demonstrated to be helpful for teachers of black learners to better see their students, to feel and think about them, and to act with them.

Black Learners and Their Teachers

Before continuing to discuss this significant term—black learners—let me make clear the fact that there are many kinds of black children. Some are, as their families have been for generations, as distinctly middle class as any white child. Though often ignored and left out of the mainstream, many excell in school, enter professions, and are protected by their strong families from deep hurt. Some are well-to-do; some poor in economic terms. Other sturdy black folk work hard, are upwardly mobile, and propell themselves into good, stable, often religious, lives. This paper must, of course, touch upon the problems of learners like these, but primarily it will address the concerns of the truly poor, the left out, the non-achieving black learners whose test scores continue to drop, who do not respond well in school, and who are deemed unsuccessful even by their black teachers and by their black communities.

Let me begin by sharing my views of what a good teacher of black learners is—that teacher who will have a positive impact upon the empowerment of black learners.

Good teachers of black learners are good teachers of any learners. They are not cast in one mold. Sex, race, religion, and other such differentiating factors appear to have little to do with good teaching. Such teachers are not necessarily those who are dramatic classroom actors. They are certainly not the ones who fear their administrators and supervisors, or who keep their students fixed in their seats most of the day—filling in blanks, coloring within the lines, muttering the sounds of phonics (but not being read to or reading), diagramming sentences, answering dull, rote, unimportant questions in dull, rote, unimportant ways. They are not the ones whose students necessarily do best on the ground-out-by-the-millions, expensive tests. They are definitely not the ones who teach just because of the convenient hours, the summers off, the desire for a high salary (as in Alaska, for example), the ideal settings (in the Virgin Islands, for example), the chances to move into administration, or the opportunities teaching permits them to study for other professions. If these are not the best teachers, there are other characteristics which do define the excellent ones.

Again, superior teachers of black children can be of either sex and of any race, background, or culture. As long as they meet the

criteria cited in this article they should be able to meet anyone's demands. However, it may be that black teachers will find it easier to meet the criteria—especially the more subtle ones which may require some inborn cultural affinities. This tentative suggestion obviously requires research and indepth study.

The Source of Superior Teachers

Many really superior teachers are born that way. Teaching is quite possibly an art—like dancing, painting, playing musical instruments, athletics, acting, or any other great art or skill. Great teachers seem to be born, and ought to be discovered early. They sometimes are, by parents and others who see them "playing school" or interacting supportively with other children. They must also be inspired, educated, and supported in their desire to teach.

Unfortunately, many born teachers are discouraged early because teaching is no longer seen as an honorable or even desirable profession. It lost its lustre first for men; then for women. Teaching black learners, considered very important by whites after the Civil War and by educated blacks through desegregation, is now too often shunned by both whites and blacks. It does not help that there is little prestige attached to teaching poor students or that a kind of fearful hysteria about the difficulties of teaching blacks has been generated by the mass media. The media's emphasis of comparative test results has exacerbated the situation. Nor does it help at all that black and white students—especially women—are being steered away from teaching into professions like law, where some of the same arts and skills required for teaching are needed.

The Needs of Teachers

Of course, the ability to inspire, educate, and support students is an instructional characteristic needed by teachers of all children, but it is especially required by those who teach black learners. Such teachers ought to be recruited carefully; taught all that they need to know about the divergent needs of black learners; given exposure to a body of knowledge about how all children learn and about the subject matter they must teach; and given the supervisory support, in-service training and high quality, teacher-selected material they will need in order to successfully meet the demands of their work.

Although talented teachers seem to be born that way, it is possible to educate (and sometimes re-educate) willing persons effectively so that they can become good teachers who will succeed with black learners. They may never be master teachers, but they can become competent journeymen. Workers are needed in great numbers, and,

to varying degrees, the same qualifying attributes should be expected of teachers as are expected of the masters or journeymen in any art or skill.

Teacher Attitudes

Teachers of black children must have the correct attitudes and expectations about their students. They must have competence in the subject matter and knowledge of many methods for teaching it, together with clear understandings—based upon knowledge—about the diverse nature and culture of black learners. In terms of attitudes, teachers must be positive, open, and accepting. They must believe that black children are as intelligent and as capable of learning as any others in this world. That black people in America have survived at all, in a racist society which held their forebears first as slaves and later as persecuted people, is proof of their ability to endure, to survive, and to learn.

In addition, black children have learned to master their language long before they enter school. Their teachers must learn to respect it, not to erase it. If it is not the standard English of a particular community, teachers must work with it, expand it, and use it for the benefit of the child. Thus, all teachers of black children must develop in themselves attitudes of language and cultural acceptance rather than rejection.

The Importance of Knowledge

Teachers of black children must know how language is acquired and developed by all children, but especially by black learners. They must know the processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for all learners, but will need to study some specific applications for black learners at all levels. *Tapping Potential* (1985) and its appended bibliographies should prove useful. Teachers must know the content of each subject (e.g., the content of English is literature). Teachers of black learners must not confine themselves to black literature but must teach the universe of literature at all levels—from nursery rhymes to the classics—while exposing their students to the literature of Africa, Afro-America, and as much of any other culture—Caribbean, for example—as they can.

If this all seems to imply that undergraduate or even graduate studies for teachers are not enough, but that continuing study throughout a teaching career is needed, then that is my intention. In order to teach black learners well, teachers must build upon a firm undergraduate foundation, while continuing to keep up with recent research. They must read, study, and provide themselves with additional enrichment afforded to them through such activities as

travel—all of which must be passed through the "blender" of an active intelligence in order to be shared directly with their students.

Yet knowledge is not enough. Competence implies not only knowing but, inescapably, being able to pass such knowledge on. Once more, I shall break with tradition to talk about teaching styles and methods.

Variations in Teaching Style

It does not really matter, in fact, it may be best for the learners that teachers' styles will differ; behavioral style seems to be an unimportant factor related to student achievement. What does matter is that teachers, whatever their style, must accept black children as capable learners who are able to learn anything and everything demanded of them in the classroom.

Black children do not need teachers of any race or of either sex who view them as problems and trouble-makers, or as non-verbal and withdrawn. They do not need kindly, yet often unknowingly condescending, teachers who expect very little of them because such teachers assume that black children are somehow deficient, deprived, disadvantaged, or inferior in some way. Nor do they need teachers who see them always as subjects for remedial instruction—sometimes as early as kindergarten, impossible as that may seem—who must have their language "corrected" before they can learn to read or write. Or, once they learn to reach with some facility, black children do not need teachers who attempt to twist their students to "fit"—forcing them to learn the so-called rules of reading and to learn atomistic bits of material in sequence (according to somebody's scope and sequence chart in a basal reader)—before setting them free into the world of real reading.

They do need many kinds of teachers of varying dispositions and styles of teaching. Some of these teachers may be stern and adamant; they may require much memorization work and homework and may use what may be considered a formal style of teaching that stresses the acquisition of a great body of knowledge. Others may be dramatic in their manner, capable of illuminating literary selections with the beauty of their voices, the drama of their presence, and the sincerity of their commitment. Still other teachers are quiet and persuasive ones who lead children into learning gently, with individual attention and subtle influence.

The Importance of Teachers

The teachers, not the content or methods—important as they are—come first in the learning lives of black children. Those teachers, whatever their backgrounds, must know for sure and certain that

black children can and will learn if the persons who teach them really believe that they can. *A Celebration of Teachers (1985-1986)*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, bears out this statement in the words of many famous people about their favorite language arts and English teachers. The people vary, the subject matter differs, the methods span a spectrum; but the commitment is there—and the teachers are remembered.

Good teachers of black children know that they themselves can never learn enough. They have the determination to go on learning, formally or informally, for as long as they live. They understand that *all* children are born eager to learn and can achieve high standards if they are properly taught. Here, teachers of black children might take on the mantle of Helen Keller's beloved teacher: the knowledge that if the apparently handicapped child—cut off from life in so many ways—could learn, so can the child with a black skin, a "different" language, a poor home.

The acceptance of all children as learners who already know a lot—who have concepts and ideas and language which can be built upon, extended and expanded to help them learn even more—is an essential attitude. Different teachers have varying strengths and interests, and teachers of black children should integrate their own strengths and interests into their teaching. Black children become more open to learning when teachers share and express themselves openly. Teachers' favorite stories, poems, and books are especially stimulating to the imaginations, interests and intellects of children. When these works reflect the worlds of black children, they can have a tremendous impact upon those students' self-concepts. Art, music, dance—multiethnic, but definitely those reflecting the African heritage—can have a similar effect and similarly, provide the impetus for learning.

Teaching Methods

Good—really good—teaching can only be based upon the most sensible research and the most carefully designed methods and materials, which should be field-tested and pedagogically framed to be sensitive to the needs of both teachers and learners. Teachers must not permit themselves to be forced into fads based upon incomplete or poorly designed research. States, communities, school administrators, school boards, textbook publishers, and parents are sometimes stampeded into ideas and programs that are based on research, but that contain only kernels of good. Programs such as transformational grammar, open schools, open classrooms, individualized learning, and others are examples of such short-

sightedness. Too often, school systems in search of instructional panaceas have bought into these programs wholesale and have purchased badly designed computer hardware and software and poorly designed materials that purport to be "teacher-proof." Often, these materials—which are usually designated for inner-city schools or those schools whose constituencies accept them without complaint—make victims of black children. Much more diligent teacher and student awareness is needed to combat them.

Teaching Materials

Teaching materials—certainly the literature—must be multiethnic. Sexism and racism must be addressed. All learners must learn and know the same things about both majority and minority people. All learners have a right to see themselves in and to learn about themselves from the materials used for teaching. They have a right to see that their cultures are respected in those materials; that their great men and women are acknowledged as great; that the writings, discoveries, and accomplishments of their people are included and undistorted in the record of history.

I strongly recommend that teachers read *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* by Rudine Sims (1982), for greater insight into useful reading for black children. Teachers of black learners should read publications written and published *by* blacks—not just about them. No matter how good the materials are, however, the key elements in the learning lives of the children is the handling of those materials, the creation of new materials, and the attitudes, interpretations, and extensions of them by the teachers themselves.

Conclusion

In an article of this genre, I have positioned my remarks on the subject of teachers and their potential impact on black students in a general way. There is little of greater importance for black learners than that they have, as first teachers, persons who will introduce them with skill and love to the initial learning steps that any child takes in school—to the world of reading and writing. From the earliest grades through their entire school experience, black learners need and deserve teachers of great knowledge, skill, and understanding. These teachers must expect black children to learn, must maintain high standards for learning, and must accept the wealth of experiences black children bring to the classroom.

From the start, such teachers will know how to listen to black children in order to use what they hear to help them teach; they will observe the children and will use what they see and sense; they

will read with the children and will use real reading matter; they will write fully and often with the children—avoiding short-answer materials—and they will use what they write as part of their lessons. Finally, they will talk with the children and will use the children's interests to teach them to use language with clarity and appropriateness for varied occasions and audiences.

Many different kinds of teachers; many different skills and competencies; many effective strategies and methods; many and varied books and other materials; many correct understandings and attitudes are needed to assure success in school for the many kinds of black students who enter our schools daily. It is our task as teachers to apply all of these skills and measures to assure the academic success that will ultimately lead to the empowerment of these black learners.

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Cooperative Learning and the Education of Black Students

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It has been thirty-two years since the Supreme Court struck down "separate but equal" practices that provided systematically inferior education for most black students. Over this period, the quality and quantity of education provided to black children has dramatically increased. In the past decade in particular, the achievement gap between black and white students has begun to diminish, according to scores on both the Scholastic Achievement Test and the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

However, much still remains to be done. White students still consistently outperform blacks on every national achievement measure. Desegregation has declined as an issue, but the majority of black students remain in underfunded, low-status, inner-city schools that have few realistic hopes (at least, not in the near term) of significant increases in resources.

Under today's circumstances, it is important for educators who are concerned about the achievement of black students to search for instructional methods and programs that can increase these students' achievement while using the resources that already exist. This paper discusses the effective use of one resource that schools have in abundance but do not always use to best advantage: *the students themselves.* A substantial body of research done over the past fifteen years has established that instructional methods in which students work with one another to learn academic material can be consistently effective in increasing student achievement. These *cooperative learning* methods have been particularly successful with black students, in both desegregated and in majority-black schools.

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Cooperative Learning Methods

The most extensively researched and consistently effective cooperative learning methods for increasing academic achievement are a family of techniques developed at Johns Hopkins University. These are: *Student Teams–Achievement Divisions* (STAD), *Teams–Games–Tournament* (TGT), *Team Accelerated Instruction* (TAI), and *Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition* (CIRC).

In cooperative learning programs, students work together to master material initially presented by the teacher. For example, in STAD programs, a teacher might present a lesson on map reading, and then give students time to work with maps and answer questions about them in their teams. The teams are heterogeneous; made up of high-, average-, and low-achievers; boys and girls; and students of any ethnic groups represented in the class. After having a chance to study in their teams, students take individual quizzes on map reading. When students' quiz scores are added up, all teams whose average scores meet a high criterion receive special recognition, such as fancy certificates or having their team picture posted in the classroom.

Teams-Games-Tournament, developed by David DeVries and Keith Edwards, is similar to STAD except that, instead of quizzes, students compete in academic tournaments to add points to their team scores. Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI), combines cooperative learning with individualized instruction to teach elementary mathematics. Students work on materials at their own level; teammates check one another's work and help one another with questions, freeing the teacher to provide direct instruction to subgroups of students working on the same skills. TAI has had the largest achievement effects of all the cooperative learning methods. The newest cooperative method is Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), which uses teams during follow-up times in reading, vocabulary, and decoding study; story grammar activities; and reading comprehension study. CIRC uses peer response groups to teach writing and language arts.

There are many other quite different cooperative learning methods in use today. In Elliot Aronson's "Jigsaw Teaching," students become "experts" on subtopics relating to a larger topic that the class as a whole is studying (Aronson, 1978). For example, in a unit on the development of labor unions, one member of each team may become an expert on the early history of unions; another on the internal organization and functions of unions; a third on the economic and political impact of unions; and a fourth on the status of unions today. The "experts" read material on their topics and

then meet in "expert groups" composed of students from different teams to discuss them. The "experts" then return to their teams and take turns teaching their teammates about their topics. Finally, all team members are quizzed and (in some forms of Jigsaw) team scores are computed and team recognition is given.

With some cooperative learning methods, such as Shlomo and Yael Sharan's "Group Investigation" (Sharan and Sharan, 1976) and Kagan's "Co-op-Co-op" (Kagan, 1985), students take on specific roles within their groups as the groups prepare projects or reports to share with the class. In others, such as David and Roger Johnson's methods (Johnson, D.W., et al, 1985), students work together to complete worksheets or engage in structured, "constructive controversy" on controversial topics. A science/mathematics program developed by Edward DeAvila and Elizabeth Cohen, called "Finding Out/Descubrimiento"(DeAvila and Duncan, 1984), used mostly in bilingual classes, engages students in a series of discovery-oriented activities within small, mixed-ability groups.

Research on cooperative learning methods has taken place in grades 2-12; in urban, suburban, and rural schools; and in subjects from mathematics to language arts to social studies to science. The findings are that certain forms of cooperative learning are consistently effective in increasing student achievement, as is usually measured on standardized tests. However, there are two elements that must be included in a cooperative learning program if it is to be instructionally effective. First, groups must be rewarded for doing well as a group. For example, members of teams that meet certain criteria may receive certificates, a little extra recess time, or recognition in a class newsletter or bulletin board. Second, the group's success must depend on the individual learning of each group member, as when team members' quiz scores are added together to form a total team score.

These factors must be present in cooperative learning methods so that students will be motivated to take their teammates' achievements seriously. Students typically have many years of experience in being told to "do your own work" and that helping is cheating. To overcome this past experience, students need some sort of incentive to really demand excellence of one another and to provide high-quality explanations and help to each other. The rationale behind basing group success on individual learning is to ensure that students become concerned about the learning of *every* member of the group. If the group produces a single project or worksheet, there is little reason for group members to see that all of their groupmates understand the skills involved—the most able students would do the group's work with minimal help from the

less able ones. In contrast, if the group's success depends on the learning of every member of the group, then the activity of the group is focused on explanations, discussions, and assessments of group members' understanding so that any problems can be exposed and resolved.

Cooperative Learning and Black Student Achievement

When cooperative learning methods incorporate group rewards based on group members' individual learning, their effects on student achievement are consistently positive, particularly for black students. Thirty-five studies, lasting from four to thirty weeks, have compared student achievement in cooperative learning programs to that in traditional program control groups. Thirty of these (86%) have found significantly higher achievement for the cooperative classes; none have favored control classes. One recent study found that black ninth-graders in Georgia who participated in STAD programs in social studies scored 30% higher than control students. A study in inner-city Philadelphia schools found similar effects of STAD programs in ninth-grade mathematics. In a study in inner-city Wilmington, TAI students in grades 4–6 gained 1.63 grade-equivalents in mathematics computations in 18 weeks, while control students gained only .61 grade-equivalents. Two recent studies in integrated suburban schools in Maryland found that students in a CIRC program gained at least 40% of a grade-equivalent more than control students on standardized reading comprehension, reading vocabulary, language expression, and spelling scales; and far exceeded control students in ratings of writing samples.

Positive effects of cooperative learning are not limited to high- or low-achievers, but these methods seem to be particularly effective for black students regardless of achievement level. For example, in one rural Maryland study, black students started out significantly behind whites in language arts achievement; after 12 weeks of STAD, the achievement gap was gone. Other studies (though not all) have supported this finding. Researchers studying this phenomenon have hypothesized that black students may gain so outstandingly from cooperative learning because they are known to be more favorable toward cooperating with their peers than are white students. Some of the social and motivational dynamics of team sports, in which black students excel, are captured in cooperative learning. This may help explain the particularly strong effects of these methods on black student achievement. These findings have led one researcher (Kagan, 1985), to propose that the competitive nature of the traditional classroom creates a "structural bias"

against black and Hispanic students, whose cultures reward cooperating rather than competing with peers.

Increased achievement is not the only outcome of cooperative learning. Researchers have also found that after participating in cooperative learning activities, students have improved attitudes toward their classmates, particularly those of different ethnicities. For example, one study of STAD in inner-city Baltimore schools found that black and white students who participated in STAD not only had significantly more friends of the other race than did other students, but they maintained these friendships into the following school year. Attitudes toward students who are mainstreamed have also been improved in studies of STAD and TAI.

CONCLUSION

Research on cooperative learning has shown that, if properly organized, students can help one another to achieve at a level beyond that which they can attain on their own. Student self-esteem is typically significantly enhanced as a result of cooperative learning. Students learn how to cooperate to get a job done, and they come to see the value of cooperation with others. The idea behind cooperative learning is that if students want to succeed as a team, they will encourage and help their teammates to excel. Often, students can do an outstanding job of explaining difficult ideas to one another by translating the teacher's language into "kid language."

Cooperative learning is effective for all students, but is particularly effective for black students, regardless of whether they are in desegregated or majority-black schools. In desegregated settings, experience in cooperative learning goes a long way toward breaking down barriers to cross-racial friendships and respect. In a time of increasing expectations and diminishing resources for the education of black students, we cannot afford to ignore the combinant potential of cooperative learning methods and programs to unlock the most powerful, free instructional resource available in any school: the students themselves.

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Section III:

The Home–School Partnership

How does stress in black families affect school achievement? What can be done about it? What are some of the characteristics of poor, urban black families where children are successfully learning to read and write? Does parent participation in the schools really make a difference? How have school districts successfully worked with families of diverse backgrounds? These are the key questions addressed by the authors in the following section.

Comer begins by reviewing the factors that have increased stress on all families but that affect a disproportionate number of black families. He describes his work in two low-income black schools in the northeast and delineates the implications of his findings for improved school achievement. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines give us an in-depth look at six black families living in inner-city poverty conditions. Their analysis of successful literacy development in these homes gives us reason to take a second look at how we value the accomplishments of such families. Ascher and Flaxman provide us with a review of the research on parent participation and school achievement. They, along with Edwards, give us an abundance of evidence of successful home-school models.

Parent Participation and the Achievement of Disadvantaged Students

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Although the idea of parental involvement in schooling is certainly not new, enthusiasm for bringing parents into the educational process tends to come in waves that are shaped by the political climate. During the activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, "parent control" was the by-word, and it was considered important to involve parents in educational decision-making in order to make schools more responsive to their needs. After a period of relative quiet on the parent involvement front, the current revival of interest directs its focus more on how involving parents can increase school productivity. Just as the goal of schooling is now being more narrowly defined to stress teaching "the basics," so, too, parents are being called upon to assist in improving students' academic achievement. The current argument is that because a typical student spends only about 16 percent of his or her potential educative time from birth through age 18 in a school setting (and as little as a quarter of that time on-task), parents still control potentially six times as many educative hours as do the schools. Therefore, parents offer a relatively untapped resource for improving academic learning.

The recent renewal of interest in parent involvement has occurred for several reasons. Cuts in public funding for education have encouraged schools to find assistance from other groups. As business and civic organizations have expanded their role in the planning and funding of school activities, schools have also looked to parent groups as constituencies capable of providing or withdrawing much-needed support. Moreover, discussions of educational vouchers have given the issue of parental choice and involvement

new seriousness. Finally, recent research findings and reform commission recommendations have emphasized that achievement can be enhanced when parents are involved in homework (Walberg, 1985; 1984; Graue, et al, 1983; U.S. Department of Education, 1986).

In fact, until this new wave of interest the notion of parent involvement tended to be ambiguous, more likely to bring with it strong positive or negative reactions than a certainty about its meaning. Part of the confusion has stemmed from an uncertainty over whether educational, social, or political goals were sought. Thus, studies of the educational effectiveness of parent involvement have included everything from mothers providing juice and cookies, chaperoning, tutoring, and acting as classroom aides, to parents sitting on school boards, becoming active in the PTA, or simply using the school for community activities. At-home participation of parents has meant anything from as simple a task as signing report cards to the more time- and thought-consuming help with homework and initiating of other educational activities.

Understanding the effect of parent participation on student achievement is made still more difficult because of the intervening influence of social class on both. Schools serving high socioeconomic families tend to have high parent involvement in all kinds of school activities and home learning, as well as high student achievement, while schools serving low socioeconomic families have both lower parent involvement and achievement. Though race appears to be an additional intervening variable, its relationship to parent involvement is not yet clear.

Helping Disadvantaged Students Through School Involvement

A few studies, greatly varied in methodology and covering a wide range of parental activities,attempt either to control for the effects of socioeconomic class or to use only low-income families to examine the effects of parent involvement on student achievement. Despite the fact that minority students may well be middle-class, some of these studies use low-income and black or Hispanic students as interchangeable categories.

A comparison of schools serving only low socioeconomic status and/or minority students (California Department of Education, 1977) indicated that those with higher achievement had greater community support and more adult volunteers than did low-achieving schools. Similarly, a study of a city-wide reading improvement project for low-income minority sixth-grade students (Armor, et al, 1976) demonstrated that, while background factors such as socioeconomic status, health, ethnicity, attendance, and early reading scores

accounted for most of the variation in improvement, community involvement variables also played an important role. The researchers ranked the participating schools according to school-neighborhood cooperation: from traditional attempts at outreach (asking parents to become passively and tangentially involved); to making provisions for active and sustained parent involvement, including planning and monitoring school activities; to creating a feeling of community integration by providing school space for neighborhood use. In the black community particularly, school-neighborhood cooperation was key. In districts where provisions were made for active and sustained parent involvement in monitoring school activities and participating in decision-making, the sixth-grade student reading levels rose.

On the other hand, parent participation did not raise reading scores in the Mexican American neighborhoods, although the school most efective in holding back losses (as opposed to making gains) was also the one with the highest level of school-community integration and awareness among Spanish-speaking parents. The researchers have speculated that language may have created barriers to communication in the Hispanic community, and that outreach programs there were more directed to community than to educational needs. Nevertheless, it appears that parent involvement in both cases enhanced the achievement of low-income students.

In addition to the amount of parent involvement, the kind of involvement helps determine its effect on student achievement, according to several studies. In a survey of 135 midwestern elementary principals, Wagenaar (1977) found that, after controlling for socioeconomic status, schools with higher achievement were more open to parent and community involvement while more "closed" schools had lower achievement levels and community support. Community support and fund-raising, attendance at school meetings, and school functions involving the community were all highly correlated with achievement. Less so were community group use of school facilities, and level and number of parent-school contacts. Finally, citizen participation in policy decision-making did not seem to affect achievement.

Clancy (1982) investigated parent involvement in 19 elementary schools which had shown a dramatic improvement in their Michigan Educational Assessment Program test scores. Though the schools varied in size, wealth, kinds of community, pupil-teacher ratios, and even in expenditure-per-pupil, the socioeconomic background of the families tended to be lower than average. Most schools had community education programs, such as arts and crafts classes and recreational activities, to reach and communicate their objectives to

parents and to familiarize them with school staff. These community education programs had also won overall community support by serving non-public school parents, such as senior citizens, non-parents, and parents of children in private schools.

Finally, a study of second- and third-grade classes in 256 California schools (controlling again for socioeconomic status) demonstrated that parent participation was strongly related to student achievement (Herman and Yeh, 1983). Moreover, through a path analysis, parent participation was found to relate positively to both parents' perception of their influence on school decision-making and the quality of parent-teacher relations, as judged by both parties—though neither of these subjective factors directly influenced student achievement. Finally, contrary to expectations, the amount of home-school communication—perhaps, as the authors suggest, because it tended to be from school to home only—was related to achievement only indirectly, as it influenced parent participation.

Helping Students at Home

Parent participation in education at home appears more clear-cut in its effectiveness for improving student achievement than parent involvement in decision-making and other less directly educational roles. Moreover, the effectiveness of school policy that is directed at involving parents in at-home learning appears particularly useful for low-income elementary school children, whose parents may not naturally participate. One analysis of 29 controlled studies conducted during the last decade (Walberg, 1984), found that 91 percent of the comparisons favored children in programs (often of no longer than a semester) designed to improve the learning environment of the home over those children who did not participate in such programs. Although the average effect was twice that of socioeconomic status, some programs had effects ten times as large. Other studies show that the effects of parents' efforts are sustained for at least one year and, in some cases, for as long as three to five years after the end of the parent participation program (Becker, 1984; Cotton and Savard, 1982).

Barth (1979), in a review of 24 studies using different types of at-home parental reinforcement for in-school academic and behavior change activities, found that what parents do at home, as well as what schools do to promote home learning, makes a difference in student achievement. At-home parental reinforcement was initiated by school contacts ranging from daily or weekly notes to more elaborate plans and programs, but, according to Barth, almost any system of regular contact was effective, and there was no need for sophisticated parent education programs.

However, other evidence suggests that not all kinds of parent involvement in at-home learning are equally helpful. Gillium (1977), for example, compared the effects of two parent involvement strategies on the reading test scores of second- and sixth-grade students. One type of parent involvement consisted merely of filling out questionnaires and attending large group meetings. The other was a parental intervention strategy that included in-service training for teachers and administrators in working with parents; training for 40 parent leaders, who then conducted parent education sessions for their peers; vouchers for educational materials redeemable by both schools and parents, based on the level of parent involvement; and stipends to parents for attending meetings. In those schools where parent involvement was largely symbolic, student performance was lower than in those where parents helped decide what was taught and had responsibility for working with children.

There is also evidence that, because not all parents know how to get involved in school-related activities, education programs directed towards them may be helpful. A recent study by Epstein (1984) focused on the effects of teachers' efforts to educate parents for home learning activities. Epstein compared the fall and spring reading and mathematics scores of 293 third- and fifth-grade Baltimore students to determine the effect of parent involvement practices. In fact, teachers committed to involving parents were able to help lesser- and better-educated parents to more nearly resemble each other in the assistance they gave their children. According to Epstein, two types of parents influenced growth in reading achievement: parents who were expected to help their children (because they had more education), and parents who were helped to help their children (because their children's teachers involved them in learning activities). Since even better-educated parents were not able to help their children improve in mathematics, Epstein suggested that "teachers may need to give more attention to helping parents of older children learn *how to help* their children in math at home."

Research on home-school relationships tends to follow one of two presuppositions: that, in order to improve the schooling of disadvantaged students, educators must change what goes on in home learning in the lower socioeconomic class and minority family (Walberg, 1985; 1984; Grau, et al, 1983); or that, in order to make schooling more effective for these students, educators must learn from parents how to make their instructional styles more harmonious with those that are already occurring in the home—that is, that the learning of teachers and parents must be a more mutual experience

(Heath, 1983; Lareau and Benson, 1984). Those who take the former view offer pre-set suggestions, including learning packages, for parental instruction; those who take the latter view tend to suggest meetings, discussions, even participant observation by teachers of home life. Though no research yet compares the results of these two different strategies, the warning of Lareau and Benson (1982) is worth heeding: "In some school settings, teachers must reach out strongly but sensitively if the relationship is to work. If this fact is ignored, home–school partnerships will widen the gap in school performance that is related to social class."

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Black Family Stress and School Achievement

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INTRODUCTION

It is more than a cliché to say that education begins at home. It begins with the first interactions between parents and child, if not before birth. And in the important period between birth and five years, parents must move children along critical developmental pathways to the point that they are able to meet the academic and behavioral tasks, and take advantage of the opportunities, in the school setting. Families under stress—for whatever reason—are least able to do so. Many educators are not trained, and most schools are not structured, to compensate for the underdevelopment of children from stressed families. This often leads to a downhill academic and behavioral course, not only for the children, but also for the staff, school and parents.

A disproportionate number of black families experience above-average economic and social stresses. Intervention is needed in the social systems beyond the school, but significant intervention is possible and necessary at the level of each school building. School staff can organize and work to compensate for the underdevelopment of children and to promote academic and behavioral achievement at the level of each child's potential or at a level needed for desirable social functioning. If this does not occur for the large number of students currently underdeveloped, then the quality of American life will continue to deteriorate for all of us. In this discussion I will review the factors which have increased stress on all families—a disproportionate number of black families—the implications for child development at home and school, and discuss my work in two low-income black schools in New Haven, Connecticut, and the implications of my findings.

Increased Family Stress

Prior to the 1900s, and even through the end of World War II, heads of households could meet their adult responsibilities as providers, child-rearers, and citizens without specialized training. Being able to do so gave most a sense of adequacy and won them the respect of others in their social network. This, in turn, gave them a sense of social and psychological belonging and well-being. These forces were extremely powerful because of the nature of pre-1945 communities.

Our nation was then made up largely of small towns and rural areas; even the cities were collections of small towns. As a result, there was an interaction between authority figures—parents, teachers, administrators, ministers, and others. Travel and communication was slow and limited. Thus, little information came in from the outside of such communities. The important adults in the lives of children—parents, teachers, religious leaders—were the major models of behavior. Because they interacted with each other regularly, expectations were clear for children and adults. There was a sense of place and belonging for all, even if it was not a highly desirable place. There was also a reasonable degree of trust among authority figures.

As a result, these important authority figures were the "source of all truth" about what was good, bad, right, and wrong, and they spoke with a "common tongue" on these issues. There was almost a conspiracy to make certain that children grew up and performed in a responsible way. This situation was also facilitated by the fact that work and play was local and communal. Heads of housholds often walked to work. Recreation was often through church or social groups.

All of these conditions created a powerful sense of community, and the school was a natural part of the community. School people were highly respected and trusted, and there was an automatic transfer of authority from parents to the school staff. As a result of all of these conditions, there was less acting up, and acting out, behavior on the part of students. Even when students were underprepared from a developmental standpoint, they created few problems in school. Before 1900 and even up until 1945, most of them could still find jobs in which they could earn a living and meet their adult responsibilities.

After World War II, developments in science and technology created dramatic changes in the nature of community. By the 1950s, most Americans lived in metropolitan areas. Many more people travelled long distances to work and play. Interaction between authority figures decreased, with a concomitant decrease in trust

and belonging. Television brought rapid, visual communication into most homes. Children observed attitudes, values, and ways from around the world, sometimes different from those being taught by their parents. There were many more models of behavior than parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other meaningful adults. Important authority figures were no longer the source of all truth, nor did they speak with a common tongue. Young people had much more information to integrate into their developing psyches and to learn to act upon appropriately. Recreation became increasingly more commercial and was more often sought outside of the community. Workers lived farther away from their jobs. All of these factors decreased the sense of community.

School lost its place as a natural part of the communty. This led to increasing distrust and alienation between school people and families who felt marginal or rejected from the mainstream of the society for one reason or another. In some cases, the school and school people were viewed as "the enemy." These conditions made it more difficult for teachers and administrators to support the social and psychological development of children. A first grade teacher told me once that on the first day of school one youngster raised his hand and told her that his mother said, "You don't have to do what the teacher tells you to do."

After World War II, education became the ticket of admission to living-wage jobs whether it was needed to hold a particular job or not. Today when children are underprepared for school and leave, they are often on a downhill course for life. Also, today's jobs and our complex social system require higher levels of interactive social and psychological skills than ever to simply meet everyday life demands.

The situation, then, is that a very high level of skills is now necessary for individuals to meet their adult responsibilities. Yet, developing children are no more mature today than they were yesterday. When they need more trusted and close adults to help them integrate the increased amount of information they receive, they actually have contact with fewer such trusted individuals due to changed community conditions. Complex job, social functioning, and child development requirements put all families under stress. Families that were undereducated, outside of, or marginal to the economic mainstream prior to the 1940s are under the greatest stress. A disproportionate number of such families are black.

Child Development and Academic Learning

Again, academic learnings has never before been so necessary to meet adult responsibilities—working, living in and caring for self

and a family, achieving satisfaction and meaning, performing well as a citizen. Children are not born capable of carrying out any of these tasks. They are born totally dependent, with only their biological potentials, aggressive energy, and the capacity for establishing relationships. Caretakers, usually parents, must move children along developmental pathways to maturity and a skill level which makes adult task management possible.

Development along several pathways—social, psycho-emotional, moral, speech and language, and intellectual-cognitive-academic—is critically important in order for children to achieve well academically and to develop the interactive skills needed to achieve adult goals. Caretakers must also channel aggression into the energy of work and play; the capacity to establish relationships must be utilized to promote caring and responsible conduct. Growth along individual pathways facilitates growth along all; therefore, academic learning is inextricably tied to overall development.

In the process of caring for the dependent child, a socio-emotional attachment, child to caretaker and vice versa, takes place. This permits the child to imitate, identify, and internalize the attitudes, values, and ways of the caretaker and motivates the caretaker to promote the development of the child. In a variety of commonplace activities, parents and/or caretakers teach, model, and motivate. Social, psychological, and intellectual development takes place as parents play with young children; as they help them learn to play with other children, to negotiate rather than fight, to think about the solution to a problem rather than to act impulsively. Parents promote development as they help children think about what is right, wrong, good, or bad. Reading to the young child teaches pre-reading skills and motivates children to read and master other learning tasks. These are but a few examples of the many parent-child interactions that promote the kind of development that makes academic learning important and possible.

When these interactions are skillfully carried out, children master tasks in a way in which they gain not only specific skills, but confidence, self-esteem, the willingness to take learning chances, and to act autonomously and generally feel good about themselves and their potential. These outcomes are most likely when parents teach and guide more than punish and control; when they are attentive and appreciative of a child's achievement, appropriately supportive and constructively critical; and when they are reasonably calm but confident in their own manner. These conditions permit children to enter school at about five years of age at the level of development and with the skills and interest that make academic learning possible. Parents under the least amount of economic and social

stress are the ones most likely to promote the kind of development necessary for school success.

School people are fully aware that they must build on the intellectual development of the child in order to teach academic skills. But they are often not aware that underdevelopment along the psycho-emotional, social, and moral developmental pathways greatly interferes with teaching academic skills. Underdevelopment along these pathways frequently leads to behavior that is viewed as "bad," and academic performance that suggests limited ability. The tendency is to punish or to have low expectations for such children rather than to adjust staff behavior and activities to compensate for their underdevelopment. This makes the attachment, imitation, identification, and internalization process difficult. The necessary skills are not learned, and confidence, high self-esteem, learning chance-taking, and other developments necessary for children to feel good about themselves cannot take place. This leads to low academic achievement in school.

Many kindergarten-aged children do compensate for their underdevelopment; they respond to academic teaching and make significant progress. By the third grade, the nature of learning becomes more abstract and underdevelopment along the intellectual pathway again creates a significant learning problem. At the same time such children develop a capacity to place themselves in the social scheme of things—different from other children, school people, better-off neighbors. The combination of academic underdevelopment and a sense of not belonging can cause a number of children to lose their interest in meeting the school task. But again, many respond to teaching and catch up, only to turn away again as apparent social and economic opportunity limitations outside of school begin to become apparent at around 15 or 16 years of age.

As mentioned, a disproportionate number of such students are black. They perceive at some level that the limitations of opportunity are related to issues of race. This creates anger and alienation towards mainstream, predominantly white-controlled institutions in the political, economic, and social mainstream of the society. As future generations of young black people are unable to achieve within the mainstream of the society, their anger and alienation will grow and greatly threaten the quality of American life. All of these factors were a consideration in the creation of our intervention program in New Haven.

The Yale Child Study Center—New Haven School System Intervention

In 1968 the Yale Child Study Center began to work collaboratively with the New Haven School System to improve the opportunity for

elementary school-aged children to perform adequately both socially and academically. It was believed that the same skills needed to be successful in school would be needed to be successful in life and that successful school achievement would increase the chances for individuals to cope with life tasks, thereby reducing the likelihood of behavioral problems in the future. The strategy was to apply the principles of the behavioral and social sciences to every aspect of school functioning—a systems-level intervention—rather than treating any particular group within the school as the source of learning problems. A four-person team from the Child Study Center worked directly with the staffs of two elementary schools (one kindergarten through fourth grade, and one kindergarten through sixth grade) to implement the program.

A four-element intervention approach was developed, with a management team, a mental health team, a parent's program, and a curriculum and staff development program. The ten- to fourteen-member management team was representative of all the adults in the building—teachers selected by teachers, parents selected by parents, aides selected by aides, and our mental health team member, all led by the principal. This group identified problems and opportunities within the school, prioritized needs, planned the intervention, mobilized available resources, carried out the intervention, and evaluated and modified the program on an ongoing basis. They addressed social climate and academic and staff development issues. The collaborative work of this group helped to restore, through a very systematic effort, the kind of trust between home and school which existed in a natural way in the pre-1940s schools. It gave the school a sense of direction and order, and gave all of the participants a sense of ownership in the school program, an understanding of what they were trying to accomplish, and a stake in the outcome. This greatly reduced intergroup conflict between parents, teachers, administrators, and others. It made all of the adults more available to support the development of children along the pathways necessary for school success.

A mental health member served on the management group to ensure that all of the group's activities would be sensitive to and reflective of child development principles. In addition, the mental health team shifted from a treatment-after-the-problem focus to a prevention approach. This was done by working with the management group to improve the overall climate of the school; by changing procedures and ways of working that created problems for children in particular, as well as for all people in the building; and by working with children with specific problems. In the process, programs such as the "Discovery Room" were created for children

who were turned off or lacked confidence as a result of pre-school development experiences. A "Crisis Room" was developed for children who came to school in psycho-emotional turmoil. A program was devised to keep children with the same teacher for two years, to offset the damage that discontinuity in the lives of many low-income children does to the process of attachment-imitation-identification and internalization. Some children who made no academic gain the first year made up to two years progress in the second. Numerous other applications of child development and mental health principles were made to the social system of the schools.

Parents were involved in the school program at three levels. A parent group worked on projects in support of the school program, primarily to create a good social climate. Specific social programs were carried out by parents and teachers working collaboratively. Workshops planned by parents and staff for other parents and staff were held to make it possible for all adults to support the work of the school, and for parents to prepare their children for the expectations of the school. In addition, at the second level of participation, parents were selected to serve on the overall school and management teams. Because of the trust created by these relationships and activities, many more parents turned out for the third level of participation: school activities.

All of these developments reduced the behavioral problems in the school and permitted the staff to spend more time teaching. They had more time to plan an academic program based on child development principles that would close the gap between the level of development the children brought to school and that which they needed to achieve in school. A program entitled "Social Skills Curriculum for Inner-City Children" was developed by parents, teachers, and administrators working together. It integrated the teaching of academics, the arts, and social skills in a way that gave immediacy to the importance and excitement of academic learning.

The two schools in which the program was initially established were 32nd and 33rd in achievement out of 33 schools in 1969. They had students with poor attendance records and a number of serious behavior problems. Children were 18 and 19 months behind in mathematics and reading by the fourth grade. One school was dropped from the program in 1973 and a similar school replaced it. Today, fourth-grade children in the initial school—with no change in the socioeconomic makeup of the community—are a year above grade level in achievement; they ranked as high as third in the city in 1984. The replacement school students were seven months above grade level by the fourth grade, tied for fourth in the city. Children

in the initial school have been first or second in attendance for four of the last five years and those in the replacement school were first during one of those years. The program is now being utilized in all the low-income schools, in two middle schools and in one high school, in New Haven. Our team is working with other systems in Connecticut and other states.

IMPLICATIONS

First, it is clear from this work and that of others that low-income children or children from families under social, economic, and racial stress conditions can learn at an acceptable level. While the method utilized elsewhere need not be the same, programs must address the same underlying issues.

All schools are working with developing children. School staff must understand child development, be able to respond to underdevelopment, and support and advance adequate development. It is important for teachers to understand the way in which academic learning is inextricably linked to overall growth and development. Finally, schools must be managed in a way to bring all the staff and involved groups together so that they work cooperatively to promote the fullest development of students. This must be planned in a very systematic fashion today, as opposed to the natural way that it took place in schools of the past.

Again, if most children from families under stress are not successful in school, all of our social problems are going to be aggravated in the future, with a resulting decline in the overall quality of American life. No institution is more strategically placed to meet these needs than the public school. If schools are to meet the challenge, school staffs must obtain the kind of inservice and preservice training that helps them to understand and apply child development and relationship principles to their work.

Growing Up Literate: Learning From Inner-City Families

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The present study of family literacy focuses upon black children living in urban poverty who are perceived by their parents to be successfully learning to read and write. Currently there are few descriptive studies which seek to develop sensitivities to and understandings of the meanings and functions of the familial contexts in which young black children living in urban poverty develop written language skills. We know very little of the ways in which the personal biographies and educative styles of families shape the literate experiences of children, or of how the children themselves initiate, absorb, and synthesize the educational influences in their lives.

Yet there is a considerable body of literature which emphasizes that literacy develops best in relational contexts that are meaningful to the young child. Thus we need to know more of the learning styles, coping strategies, and social support systems of young children living in poverty if reading and writing instruction in school is to become a meaningful complement to their everyday lives. The present study is one attempt towards this aim, and we believe that the research is especially important since it focuses upon children who are *successfully* learning to read and write despite the extraordinary economic hardships of their lives. We hope that the research will have a positive effect in providing new images of the *strengths* of the family as educator, and that it will provide practical ways in which we can build relational contexts that bring the strengths of home learning into the classrooms of the children that we study and teach.

Six families participated in the research. At the time of their entry into the study, one of the children in each of the families was con-

sidered by their parent(s) to be successfully learning to read and write. A major portion of the data was collected from four of the families, with the remaining two families providing further insights into the social processes through which young children learn to read and write in familial settings. The qualitative field research procedures employed in the study were similar to those used by Taylor (1983) in her prior resreach on family literacy. The procedures are firmly grounded in the ethnographic tradition of Frake (1962), Hymes (1974, 1980), and McDermott (1978); and synthesized for the reading field by Green and Bloome (1983) in their comprehensive description of adequate criteria for ethnographic research in educational settings.

In this article we will provide a brief overview of some of the findings. In the first section we present a synthesis of the *family characteristics* that we believe are important to young children who are learning to read and write. In the second section we focus specifically upon *literacy* and the types of uses that we have found during the four years of our visits to the families living in the Shay Avenue neighborhood. In the concluding section we argue that the findings of the study provide researchers and educators with an opportunity to consider the meanings that we give to literacy as well as the myths and stereotypes that pervade the literature on black families who live in urban poverty.

The Families: Characteristics That are Important to Young Children Learning to Read and Write

As we contemplate the families participating in the present study, any preconceived or rigid conceptions of family life fade away. Each is an original and each serves to emphasize the variety of patterns of cooperation and domestic organization that are possible in the institution that we call family. Morris (1981) speaks of such flexible household arrangements as "an adaptive response to an uncertain social and economic environment." We agree, and add that the variety of social support systems and coping strategies that we have observed serve to emphasize the *resilience* of the family when faced with the enormous pressures of societal uncertainty. It is this resilience that we wish to speak of in relationship to the children. Though each of the families is original in its configuration, it is possible to identify a number of family characteristics that are important to the success of the children in learning to read and write. In each family:

1. Literacy is a part of the social world in which the children live. Literacy is not some specific event, but is instead a con-

tinuous process through which family members communicate with one another and meet the needs of their everyday lives.

2. Due to the flexibility of the social arrangements, the children encounter print in various situations with family members and friends.
3. The parents expect the children to succeed. Failure is not an option.
4. There is a strong determination on the part of the parent(s) to do everything they can to ensure that the children receive a good education.
5. The parents are knowledgeable about school practices and procedures and they can talk about the ways in which their children are being taught to read and write in school.
6. Homework is an integral part of everyday life.
7. The parents did not specifically teach their children to read and write. The children's activities stem from their own interests.

Types and Uses of Reading and Writing in the Shay Avenue Neighborhood

The types and uses of reading that Heath (1983) presented in *Ways with Words* (instrumental, newsrelated, recreational, critical/educational, social-interactional and confirmational) and the types and uses of writing (memory aids, reinforcement or substitute for oral messages, social-interactional, financial and expository) are all amply in evidence in the homes of the families we visited in the Shay Avenue neighborhood. Literacy is a part of their lives just as it was in the white middle-class families of Taylor's initial study (1983). In addition to this, the inner-city families participating in the study have provided us with new understandings of the types of uses of reading and writing that can occur in family settings. In presenting this date we have used the primary categories that Heath defined in *Ways With Words*. We have modified and expanded upon Heath's descriptions of the various categories whenever it was necessary to accommodate the findings of the Shay Avenue study.

Discussion

During the past four years as we have discussed the uses of literacy in the families in the Shay Avenue neighborhood, our attention has frequently been drawn to the many ways in which the economic circumstances of their lives affect the uses of literacy that

we have begun to describe. Contrary to seemingly popular belief, one has to be "bright" to be poor and survive. Applications for food stamps, AFDC, and WICS; reminders of obligations to report changes of circumstances to the welfare board; notices on assignment of child support; and brochures such as "What to Bring with You When You Apply for Home Energy Assistance" are all examples of the instrumental uses of reading and writing that are a part of the everyday lives of the families with whom we are working.

The economic circumstances of the poor create a social climate in which print in various forms is used to intrude upon the ways in which they live—when one is poor, the private becomes public. One young woman with whom we talked told us that when she was pregnant with her first child she applied for food stamps. How many times she had had sexual intercourse and where it had taken place were among the questions asked as she filled in the forms that created a permanent written record of her personal life and financial situation.

In studying the Shay Avenue families, the uses of reading and writing to obtain assistance catch the eye. Clearly, one's ability to obtain food and shelter can depend upon one's ability to read and write. Skeptics may suggest that such paperwork is often completed by others (in our experience, such help from social agencies is actually difficult to obtain); however, the Shay Avenue families are more than mere fillers of forms—*they are active members of a print community in which literacy is used for a wide variety of purposes (e.g. social, technical, aesthetic), for a wide variety of audiences, and in a wide variety of situations.* Thus, in focusing on the children, we cannot emphasize enough that *poor children are active participants and interpreters in a social world in which texts are written and read.*

The paradoxes between these findings and those which have come to be accepted (and expected) are cause for serious concern. For example in *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America,* Boyer (1983) states,

> Dropouts tend to come from poor families. They have more siblings, more broken homes, higher levels of parental punitiveness and lower self-esteem. Their parents also have less schooling. Simply put, many students who leave school come from stressful homes.

We acknowledge that some of the parents with whom we are working have not finished high school, and that some of the older children have "dropped out" of school during the four years that we have been visiting the families. We are also aware that many of the children come from so-called "broken homes." But no one can deny that these are *literate homes.*

One explanation for this apparent paradox lies in the current interpretation of literacy as a series of dispassionate skills that can be counted, measured, and weighed. Even when we speak of literacy as a social process, we rarely look beyond the literacy event and the linguistic transactions that take place. So much of the process remains buried in the multiple layers of communication that are a part of our (con)textual worlds. We forget that to be literate is a uniquely human experience that enables us to deal with ourselves and to better understand one another. The following autobiographical statement speaks directly to this issue:

> I know of a child who was very very lonley and even more so as a woman. . . .She didn't even do very good in school, not because she was slow or anything, but she was afried that people would make fun of her if she made a mistake in class that even if she knew the right answer she would not try, so fanley she just droped out of school altogether, and that made things even worse.

The writer, who died when she was thirty eight, never finished high school, and yet she was able to write the fourteen pages of connected prose that she gave to her daughter just before her death. This is a vivid example of one of the ways in which families, parents and children, "bring each other into being by being part of the matrix in which the other exists" (Bateson, 1984). The mother "failed" in the usual societal sense of the word; however, if one takes a theory-of-use perspective using an "insider's" view of language (see Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984), she was successful, for she succeeded in tying together texts and generations as she created new understandings of her life and the world in which her children and grandchildren live.

This particular autobiography, and the other types and uses of literacy that we have found (sometimes unexpectedly), together with the data presented by Heath (1983) and Taylor (1983), have provided us with the opportunity to raise questions about the ways in which we conceptualize literacy, the theoretical frames of our research, and the practical application of the "outcomes" of these frames to the teaching of reading and writing to young children in school. The problem arises when we ignore the social processes of (con)textual tying and take a "traditional" approach to literacy—as a rigid set of hierarchies, taxonomies, and predetermined skills—and place them in the classrooms for children to learn. Literacy is not something that we invent in the isolation of experimentation, nor is it a series of events to be teased out of ethnographic data. Literacy cannot be quantified in numbers nor is it directly related to frequency of use. It cannot be taught through a decoding process nor through

a series of disconnected, or even well-ordered, exercises. *We can pull language apart but we cannot expect children to do the same* (Taylor and Strickland, 1986; Taylor, in press).

Children need to be able to create public and private text worlds. They need continual opportunities to generate new meanings and to maintain their personal and shared interpretations of the social, technical, and aesthetic functions and uses of literacy. It would be hard to dispute that, in American schools, few such opportunities currently exist.

Stated more formally, we would argue that:

1. Literacy is a uniquely human experience that enables us to deal with ourselves and to better understand one another. It is never a mechanical process that is solely dependent upon the skills that are taught.

2. Sex, race, economic status, and setting cannot be used as significant correlates of literacy. Variations do not follow "party lines."

Focusing specifically upon the Shay Avenue families:

1. Literacy is used for a wide variety of purposes (social, technical, aesthetic), for a wide variety of audiences, and in a wide variety of situations.

2. Literacy is not always liberating. The economic circumstances in which the families live creates a social (political?) climate in which print in various forms is used to intrude upon their everyday lives.

3. Education and literacy cannot be used interchangeably. Many of the parents are "highly" literate, and yet they are not "educated" in the traditional sense of the word.

Again, it is important to emphasize that in the Shay Avenue Study we have found that the adult family members use reading and writing in more complex ways than any of the children have the opportunity of learning in school. Based upon the interpretations of family literacy that have been constructed in the present study, we are left to ask ourselves how we can justify or formally sanction approaches to the teaching of reading and writing in schools that rely so heavily upon a rigidly predetermined curriculum. Children bring their families and friends into their classrooms. They bring their communities into their schools. In our construction of literacy environments in schools we need to begin by considering the ways in which children can grow in the imagination of their own social lives. We need to recognize the complex communicative

abilities that are a part of their (con)textual worlds, so that every child is given the opportunity to experience a private sense of challenge and a public sense of achievement as they learn to read and write.

One of the ways to achieve this goal is to adopt a theory-of-use approach to curriculum development so that teachers and children can actively participate in developing, maintaining, and expanding upon their own personal and shared configurations of literacy. We are not suggesting a teaching of the uses of literacy. We advocate *using* literacy for genuine purposes. Families can teach us a great deal in this endeavor.

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Working with Families from Diverse Backgrounds

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The key to dramatic progress in education is rededication to learning in the home. Terrell H. Bell

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the contribution of the home to the development of literacy has received considerable attention. According to Sattes (1985) the effects of parent and home variables are indisputably tied to children's achievement throughout their entire school career. Leichter (1974) stated that the family is an arena in which virtually the entire range of human experience can take place. Epps (1983) contended that the family is the basic institution through which children learn who they are, where they fit into society, and what kinds of futures they are likely to experience. Most importantly, Clark (1983) argued that it is not class position that determines a family's ability to support their children's learning; rather it is the quality of life within the home that makes the difference. He stated that children from homes that have a warm emotional climate, where parents feel responsible and independent, tend to fare better in school. Epstein (1982) pointed out that parents' encouragement, activities, and interest at home and their participation in schools and classrooms affect their children's achievement even after the students' ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account. She further pointed out that students gain an edge in personal and academic development if their families emphasize schooling, let their children know that they do, and do so continually over the school years.

Unfortunately, not all families currently get involved in school-related activities or show interest in their children's work. Despite this attitude toward school by some families, school systems have utilized a number of strategies to increase communication between

parents and schools. Berger (1987) reported that schools interact with families by means of one-way and two-way communication. She stated that one-way communication informs parents about the school's plans and happenings. Two-way communication allows parents to feed into the school their knowledge, concerns, and desires; it requires interaction between the participants. Forms of one-way communication have included: district newsletters, handbooks, happy-grams, newspapers, spontaneous notes, suggestion boxes, yearbooks, and parent questionnaires. Two-way communication has involved: August letters, back-to-school nights, breakfast meetings, early-in-the-year contacts, exchanges, fairs, carnivals, suppers, home visits, neighborhood visits, open-door policies, parent-teacher associations, picnics, Saturday morning sessions, school maintenance projects, school programs, telephone calls, and workshops.

Strategies for Communicating with Families About the School's Reading Program

Despite the fact that current research (Epstein, 1983; 1984; Epstein and Becker, 1982) on parent involvement showed that teachers often requested parent assistance in reading, past research by Criscuolo (1979) revealed that parents often complained that the schools did not keep them informed of their children's reading progress. However, in recent years some school districts have taken a variety of steps to alleviate this problem. According to Criscuolo, some school districts have used the following types of activities to involve parents in reading: newspaper columns for parents, parent resource rooms, reading progress letters, reading homework programs, programs involving children and materials, and reading recipes. Criscuolo (1980) also reported that school districts have used kindergarten registration, brochures on questions parents ask about reading, parent activity sheets, and parent conferences on test results to communicate with parents about reading. The Children's Book Council (1979) described seven proposals to increase parent participation in their children's reading activities. These proposals included: sessions related to integrating children's books into family life; packets of reading-related materials to be distributed to new mothers; discussions of children's books by fathers; television programs focusing on children's books as an essential part of family life; workshops for parents on reading topics; fifteen-minute television programs focusing on books for specific age groups; and book fairs.

Lautenschlager and Hertz (1984) described an inexpensive program that school districts could employ to enhance parent-child

reading and to acquaint parents with the school's reading program. They suggested that school districts follow these steps:

1. Rent *The Lap Technique* (Jett-Simpson, 1981);
2. Develop and duplicate a bibliography of children's books available to be read aloud;
3. Obtain copies of an article entitled *Tough Books for Tough Toddlers* (Lock-Wouths, 1983);
4. Obtain copies of excerpts from *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (Trelease, 1982);
5. Design "Reading Begins at Home" stickers;
6. Develop a creative activity in response to reading a book;
7. Display interesting children's books;
8. Provide forms for parents to evaluate the programs' efforts.

Vukelich (1978) designed Project PROP (Preschool Readiness Outreach Program) to help parents of three- to five-year-olds enhance their children's beginning skills. Two formats were used: weekly workshops and monthly pamphlets. For 26 weeks, parents constructed games and activities to use with their children to develop oral language, visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, and listening skills. The children whose parents attended regularly made significantly greater gains on all of the prereading measures as compared to those whose parents participated minimally.

Ellis (1980) described an event organized by the San Mateo County Reading Association to inform parents of young children of the importance of reading to children. A "Reading Day at the Mall" was sponsored during which people dressed as storybook characters read to children. Pamphlets containing hints for helping preschoolers and beginning readers and a bibliography of appropriate books for children ages three to eight were distributed to parents.

Indrisano (1978) presented guidelines and program ideas for successful reading workshops for parents. She described a learning games workshop, a creative arts workshop, a community guidebook, a book/magazine discussion group, and a media exchange forum.

Esworthy (1979) designed a six-week summer reading clinic for parents. The parent workshops were held once a week for about two hours, depending upon the amount of discussion between the parents and the parent coordinator. Three sessions focused on specific skills areas that parents could work on with their children

at home. The training included the construction of instructional devices. From parents' comments, the workshops were worth the time spent.

Burgess (1982) provided eight two-hour workshops for parents to develop instructional games. Each week, parents shared their experiences with the previous week's game. Children of the parents in the experimental group scored better on the Metropolitan Readiness Test and on the Utah Test of Language Development than the children whose parents did not participate.

Parent Reading Involvement Suggestions and Instructional Practices

Comprehensive review of the reading literature (Vukelich, 1984; Harris, 1981) reveals that the most frequently made suggestions for parent reading involvement were:

1. Read to your child;
2. Be a good literate model;
3. Provide books, magazines, etc., for the child to read;
4. Build a reading atmosphere at home (place, time, library area);
5. Talk and listen to your child;
6. Exemplify a positive attitude toward reading, including praising your child for reading;
7. Provide experiences for children that are reading-related (e.g., library trips), or that can be used to stimulate interest in reading;
8. Read environmental signs and capture reading opportunities in them;
9. Provide contact with paper and pencils;
10. Be aware of your child's interests; and
11. Point out similarities and differences in objects in the environment.

Additionally, reading researchers and practitioners have outlined a number of strategies that can help parents provide extra instruction at home. Giordano (1979) described six prereading exercises for parents and day-care providers. These exercises included: reading a book to a child from eight months on (accompanied by literal, critical and judgmental questions); labelling household objects;

explaining environmental signs; creating a book; building a word bank; and acting out stories.

Kirkland (1980) discussed various daily activities that parents can provide to help develop their children's readiness skills for reading. The activities included: exposure to and interaction with books; activities for language development; writing activities such as tracing and copying; labelling toys; drawing attention to environmental print; and developing concepts and vocabulary skills through varied experiences.

Strickland (1980) stressed that parents should offer opportunities for language play in the form of games, songs, and riddles. Parents should also provide their children with as broad a language background and vocabulary foundation as possible. She also recommended that these language interactions should occur on a frequent and systematic basis.

Mountain (1971) described a simple and economical method for parents to help their preschoolers acquire a headstart in reading. The method involved three types of materials: word cards, stories written by parents, and phonics games. After learning two or three nouns, children are introduced to a verb to create a sentence. The phonics games encouraged children to make connections between sounds and letters, which ultimately lead to the understanding of word development, sentence structure, and comprehension.

Galiardo (1971) contended that children had the best start when they were born into a reading family. He suggested that parents could do a number of activities to prepare their children for the adventure of reading. These included: singing nursery rhymes and taking trips to the park, the zoo, and various other interesting places. Further, he stressed that parents should verbally interact with their children about these excursions and then create stories based on them. Most importantly, he recommended that parents should allow time for library visits and provide children with their own reading materials.

Activities for Parent-Child Participation in Reading Development

Even though researchers and practitioners have provided families with instructional strategies they can use at home, they have also provided families with specific activities for strengthening their children's reading skills. For example, Sittig (1982) listed 16 reading activities for involving parents and children in reading for fun. Some of the activities she included were:

Shopping: Take your children to the grocery store. Let the younger children find as many compound words in the store as they can

(oatmeal, for example). Let older children read the nutritional labels on some of the packages and discover what the main ingredients are.

Alphabet Night: Let your primary-school child choose a letter of the alphabet and together plan a menu with foods all beginning with that letter. For example, the letter "p" could include pasta, pears, and punch. Older children can read the recipes with you and help prepare the meal.

Oral Reading: Read to your children out loud and then let them read out loud to you. Rather than asking them factual questions, such as "What was the color of John's shirt?" ask them to share their feelings about what they read.

Television: Sit down and watch a television program with your children. Let them read the program description in the television guide. After the show, discuss your children's feelings about it.

Involving Families from Diverse Backgrounds

Some families will automatically become active in school-related activities. School districts would like for *all families* to become involved in the academic support of their children. Consequently, in recent years a growing number of school districts across the country have identified involving families from diverse backgrounds as a top priority. A review of the literature reveals a number of approaches and strategies employed by researchers and practitioners to involve parents of diverse backgrounds in school-related activities. These have included parent participation in special projects, and utilizing parents as teachers and as supporters of programs. The research shows that when parents from diverse backgrounds receive assistance from the school system, they become more involved with their children's academic program and their children do better in school (Hofmeister, 1977; McKinney, 1975; Mize, 1977). Therefore, it is crucial that schools take the initiative of inviting parents to become involved with their children's school activities. Some of the approaches and strategies that have been employed in working with families of diverse backgrounds are discussed below.

Special Projects

In Houston, the Computers Can Project (CCP), made home computers available for loan to low-income families who participated in 12 hours of training in computer use. After involvement in this program, 96 percent of the parents perceived the schools as responsive to their children's needs, in contrast to 15 percent of parents who perceived the school to be responsive to their children prior to participating in the computer program.

Project STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) included students and parents described as "culturally deprived." In this project, parents attended discussion groups that emphasized the importance of school in preparing for employment in today's technological society and the importance of parents in setting an example. Parents were asked to read daily to their children, to listen to their children read, to provide a routine "quiet" time at home for reading and study, and to be sure that children had the proper school supplies. Over the program's five-month duration, children made overall gains of 5.4 months in reading, compared to a 2.7 month gain in a comparison school.

Parents–as–Teachers Programs

Raim (1980) developed a reading club for low-income Hispanic parents. The low reading scores of pupils in the primary grades of an inner-city elementary school prompted the formation of the reading club (Parents Assistance Program). The club met weekly throughout the school year. During the first hour of the meetings, parents constructed instructional devices appropriate for their children and rehearsed their use. In the second hour, the parents used these materials with their children, under the supervision of the reading teacher.

Weekly club meetings focused upon a specific reading skill. Some representative activities follow:

1. Whole word practice was provided through writing books; drawing diagrams of rooms at home with appropriate labels; making and playing bingo; and "concentration" games;
2. Phonics skills were developed with games having a matching format. Old phonics worksheets were torn up and pages stapled together for minibooks;
3. Comprehension skills were enhanced through several sessions devoted to following directions for making simple toys and constructing decorations;
4. Word meanings were enhanced by categorizing activities using supermarket and department store advertisements. Simple crossword puzzles were also developed;
5. Reading aloud with trade books and old basals were encouraged.

The children of the parents in the reading club held grade level in reading or improved slightly.

Clegg (1973) examined the effectiveness of individually planned learning games used by low-income parents to increase the reading achievement of their second-grade children. The experimental treatment group received regular school instruction plus the eight specially constructed learning games that were played at home by the parents and the child over a period of eight weeks (a different game each week). The children in the experimental group, who had played games with their parents, achieved significantly higher reading scores than students who had not played games with their parents.

Shuck, Ulsh and Platt (1983) encouraged low SES parents to tutor their children using the PEP (Parents Encourage Pupils) calendar books and individualized homework activities tallied via a progress chart. The materials were designed to be self-explanatory. Therefore, parents who could not attend conferences could still participate. Parents in the control group did not participate in any type of parent involvement. A behavior modification plan reinforced students for each reading assignment completed. This plan included points given for daily class participation and for work done at home. Parents helped keep the records, using special calendars, and the points were tabulated monthly when children returned their calendars to schools. Parents were asked to help their children read a book, do homework assigned by the reading lab, work on a word list from the lab, or play games from the lab. The child could choose the activity from an individualized reading program. After the child completed the work, the parents circled A, B, C, or D for that day on the calendar to show the type of work done and filled in the "happy face" with a pen or pencil. Each month the students could either save points or purchase a prize from the reading laboratory store. Pencils, jacks, or other small prizes cost 600 points. Baseball hats, footballs, kites, books, etc., cost 900 to 1,500 points. Local toy stores, civic groups, and parents donated most prizes. Parent-teacher conferences were held three times; at the beginning of school, after testing in January, and at the end of the year. At each conference, the teacher gave the parents a brief written progress report. If parents could not attend the conference, the progress chart was sent home for the parents' comments and signatures. Items in the progress chart were: total number of books read; teacher's comments; work completed in the lab; homework completed; and parents' comments. The results indicated that children in the parent-tutoring program had significantly higher reading achievement scores than did the control group.

In Detroit, through the Office of Citywide Reading, High directed a Home Curriculum Program (HCP) for families of low-achieving

students (High, 1980). The families came from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The program involved middle school parents as tutors. The program's objectives were to upgrade the reading skills of parents and students, and to make parents more aware of their children's developmental needs. The school provided specifically prepared material, a parents' room, paraprofessional Home Curriculum Assistants, and workshops for parents (e.g., parenting and reading skills). High reported that the local school board was very supportive of their program, but the problem was that the district administrative bureaucracy was a disparate body from the board. Consequently, the district bureaucratic set-up operated on a year-round basis, and therefore was not sensitive or understanding of their school's particular needs.

Arturo (1980) conducted a "Parents Can Be Tutors" Program in the Miami, Florida area. The families who participated were Hispanic and Haitian-American families whose children (elementary and junior high) had demonstrated difficulty in basic skill acquisition. The families were newly arrived refugees: non-English speaking; low- to low-middle income; primarily unskilled or semi-skilled laborers. They lacked knowledge of the community and were marginally involved in civic activities. The program was designed to emphasize the tutoring role of parents in helping their children master minimal basic skills (as defined by the State of Florida) in grades three, five, and eight. Participating students were defined by school and project authorities as "low achieving." Parents voluntarily came to school with their children two nights each week to learn test requirements and how to tutor their children for the test. Emphasis was also placed on the need for families to become involved, and on the meaning of formal education in America.

Betancourt (1980) headed a Bilingual Training Institute for Parents in San Antonio, Texas. Parents were trained as tutors and co-planners. Parents were viewed as teachers of their own children, as resources for teachers, and as contributors to curriculum development (by creating and using culturally relevant materials). The Institute provided parents with training and orientation to school programs and school curriculum. Workshops focused on the following topics: language or communication barriers between parents and teachers, successful/unsuccessful models for involving bilingual parents, and barriers to home-school coordination.

Parents as Supporters Programs

Grimmett and McCoy (1980) increased lower socioeconomic families' participation by communicating with them about their children's reading progress. A description of the reading program

and a communication form were developed for the parents. The descriptive information included:

1. Goals of the reading program;
2. Terminology and definitions specific to reading (e.g., diagnosis and frustration level), and general to the school district (e.g., accountability and flexible grouping);
3. Explanations of the diagnostic–prescriptive cycle;
4. Instructional procedures;
5. Student profile components.

The results suggested that parent involvement can influence children's reading when parents receive information about the reading program. It was also noted that parents need continuous communication with their child's reading teacher in order to facilitate the quality of involvement in reading and the quantity of involvement.

Lengyel and Baghban (1980), in an effort to provide maximum support for the reading success of primary students in a rural, coal mining area developed a family reading program and a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program. The major objective of the family reading program was to encourage parents to read to their children for 15 minutes a day, seven days a week, for a period of nine weeks. Sustained Silent Reading was scheduled in the classroom for 15 minutes every afternoon. Results showed that more first- and second-grade students who participated in both programs considered reading their favorite subject, did more reading at home, and enjoyed silent reading more than did the students who participated only in the SSR. Those students who participated in both programs also received higher reading achievement scores.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of ethnic background or educational level, parents want to know specific strategies and approaches that they can be involved in to help their children; they want more contact with school personnel, and they want more information about their children's educational programs and progress. Involving parents in the training of their children is positively related to school environment. Additionally, parent attitudes and behaviors are influenced in positive ways when they become involved with schools.

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Section IV:

Keynote Presentations: The National Conferences on Educating Black Children

*Opening Remarks to the Conference on Educating Black Children**

Mary Hatwood Futrell, *President, National Education Association*

Chairman Hawkins, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor and a privilege for me to participate in the opening of this historic conference. To my knowledge, this is the first time in recent history that people such as ourselves—educators, parents, activists, and people involved in policymaking—have come together to develop strategies specifically aimed at creating better education for black children—our children.

By holding this conference, we—the representatives of concerned black people throughout America—are saying: The needs of our children have been ignored long enough. We're saying that as leaders of the black community and as black parents, we have high expectations for our children, and we're not satisfied with the quality of the education they are receiving. We are not satisfied that the average 17-year-old black student today reads at the same level as the average 13-year-old white student. An estimated 4 million blacks are illiterate; by the year 1990, 40 percent of all minority children could very well be illiterate, according to the *Nation at Risk* report. We are not satisfied that fewer and fewer black young people are applying to college. We're shocked that there are more black males between the ages of 18 and 24 in *jail* today than there are in postsecondary institutions.

Furthermore, by holding this conference we are saying that we are no longer willing to put up with high school drop-out rates of

*Hunt Valley, Maryland, September 5, 1986

more than 50 percent for black youths and up to 80 percent for Hispanic youths. Most important, we are saying that we understand that unless we as black Americans do something to help our children, no one else will.

The black community has always had to fight for education. Many people have died for it. During the slavery era, when it was illegal to teach blacks to read and write, black educators and their allies set up underground schools. Many teachers and students were whipped, tortured, and killed. Still, they persisted. During the era of segregation, many black teachers and students were jailed and lynched for demanding equal educational opportunities. Still, they demanded them.

Once again, we must mount a movement for excellent education for black American youngsters. Once again, we must persist.

It is clear that we must hold our schools, teachers, and administrators up to the highest standards. We must demand that they do more to *deliver* quality education to black children. It is clear that we must hold our federal and state governments up to the highest standards and demand that they do more to *support* quality education.

As we mount our movement for a better education for black students, the first thing we must do is hold our *own* community up to the highest standards. We must demand that black community groups and churches—most importantly, black parents and students—demonstrate the same commitment to education as did our predecessors who died or went to jail for our right to learn.

To be perfectly candid, I greatly fear that the commitment of American families to education is on the wane. I fear that the overwhelming majority of American families have become indifferent or cynical about education. These attitudes are tragic for all families. But, for black families, they are devastating.

Today, I see too many families of all races and backgrounds being more concerned about television shows and fashions—about meaningless material things—than about learning. Throughout the black community, I see too many parents who have never even visited the school attended by their children. I see too many parents who have never met the people who teach their children and who probably don't even know the names of their youngsters' teachers, much less their counselors or school administrators. These parents do virtually nothing to help their children develop the good work habits and self-discipline that it takes to succeed in school. They do virtually nothing to motivate their children to try their best.

As a classroom teacher for more than 20 years, I know from first-hand experience that almost any young person can learn—can do

almost anything—if they have someone to motivate and teach them. As we mount our movement for better education for our children, we must make sure that our youngsters get such support. We must encourage community groups, churches, businesses, trade unions, parent groups, civic associations, and schools to set up programs that help black youngsters not only to read and write better but to be successful in all their educational endeavors. These programs should help black youngsters work in more productive ways; they should help them develop the self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-confidence they need to succeed in their learning. They should help them overcome the myriad problems and pressures that often block black youngsters from doing their best in school.

Today, youngsters of all races and ethnic backgrounds are growing up in a world that is much tougher than when we were young. All groups of students—black, white, Hispanic, and others—are plagued by alarming rates of drug abuse, shocking percentages of teenage pregnancy, frightening levels of crime, and heart-rending numbers of suicides. At least one-tenth of all children entering our schools have poorly educated, even illiterate parents. Hundreds of thousands of these children will have parents who are themselves still children. They will be the offspring of unwed teenagers—teenagers unprepared for parenthood—who can offer their youngsters little or no guidance or discipline.

In America today, more than one-fifth of all youngsters live in poverty—*an increase of 33 percent since 1979*. Over one-half of all black children are poor, as are close to 39 percent of all Hispanic youngsters. All too often, these youngsters come to school hungry, ill-clothed, unhealthy, suffering from high levels of stress, and unable to concentrate on their studies. All too often, they are plagued by problems and pressures that make them either hostile or lethargic, that make them difficult to reach and teach, no matter how dedicated their teachers are.

But speaking on behalf of the school teachers of America, I can assure you that we have not given up on our students. Neither should their parents, nor their communities. As classroom teachers, we have seen thousands of students succeed despite countless disadvantages. We know that many of the brightest students in public school are poor. These children *want* to learn. They *can* learn. They *will* learn.

Today more than ever before, our children need guidance to help them face the world in which they live. They need role models they can emulate. Yet all too often, I see parents just letting their youngsters drift. Parents must have high expectations for their children, and they must help them reach these expectations.

Someone asked me the other day when parents should start getting involved in their children's education. I answered: "From the day they are born." This involvement should never end. From the time young children start to be aware of their surroundings, parents should begin to impart to them a love of learning. Parents should stress to their children that the key to successful learning is reading.

Then there are the seemingly little things. Parents should make sure that there is a special place set aside in the house for homework; that their children set aside enough time to do their studies carefully and accurately; and that the television is turned off so that the children are not distracted.

However, probably the most important way in which black parents—or any parents—can help their youngsters' education is to help them develop discipline of the mind and the body. Again I say: black parents should have high expectations for their children's behavior, and they should work to make sure that their children live up to these expectations. In short, parents should not let their children "get away" with irresponsible or lax behavior just because it might be the easiest way out.

Parents should not let their childrens' schools get away with anything, either. For example, every school should have clearly defined goals and a discipline code. Parents should ask for a copy of the goals and discipline code, and if such documents do not exist, parents should find out why! Too many schools allow students to remain undisciplined, to skip classes, to hang out in the halls. This is the preliminary step toward their hanging out on the streets. Too many of these same schools will pass students from one grade to the next just because the students sit quietly in their seats doing nothing.

It is vital for black parents to make sure that the schools are serving the needs of their youngsters. For the educational success of any child, and for the success of any school, black parents must get to know their children's teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Each and every one of us must work to encourage every black parent in America to *make* time for involvement in their children's education.

I'll admit, though, that it's not always easy for parents to get involved in the schools because too many schools, while giving lip service to parental involvement, fail to take parental needs and work schedules into account when planning school activities. I must also admit that many schools are *failing* to fulfill their teaching responsibilities to black youngsters. Allow me to cite three examples:

First, schools are not doing a good job of early diagnosis of children who are experiencing learning difficulties. Such difficulties are often not identified until these children have already fallen behind two or three grades. If learning difficulties were identified and treated in kindergarten or first grade, appropriate help could be given to keep these children performing at grade level.

Secondly, all across America, too many schools are "tracking" black youngsters into vocational or special education programs instead of encouraging them to take courses that would prepare them for college. The former can be excellent programs, but—instead of implementing effective discipline programs—they are too often used by school authorities as dumping grounds for youngsters with discipline problems.

Finally, too many schools today are failing to provide adequate counseling services to their students to help them make wise career and academic choices. For example, not enough of our children are being advised to take the academic courses that could assure success in college. Let's face it, sometimes our young people who are athletically talented are advised to take courses of study that will assure the grade point average required to remain on a varsity team, rather than courses of study that will result in success in the game of life.

To sum up: too many schools in America seem to lack high expectations for their black students.

I've repeated the theme of lack of high expectations several times because I think it is a plague that we, as advocates for black children, must face. I fear that the black community, black parents, and the schools often lack high expectations for our youngsters. But I submit to you that if a youngster can memorize a rap song, he or she can learn to memorize Shakespeare. If a youngster can appreciate Michael Jackson, he or she can learn to appreciate Mozart. If a youngster can keep track of sports scores and standings, he or she can do math.

We must have high expectations. We must instill in our youngsters a sense of pride in learning. Furthermore, we must make sure that when our youngsters strive for excellence, our schools have the resources that they need to ensure that excellence.

Unfortunately, instead of working to improve our schools, our federal government is currently engaged in a massive program of disinvestment in education. President Reagan has already taken millions of dollars away from programs that have traditionally aided

black and minority students. He has announced his intention to take away millions more.

But there is hope. If we seize the initiative, we can rally the American people to join a movement for equal educational opportunities for all, for adequately funded education, and for the restoration of funds that have been cut. We can also rally the American people to create and support early childhood education programs for four-year-olds and kindergarten for five-year-olds, because the problems black youngsters face don't start in high school or junior high—they start early on. We've got to start addressing those problems just as early on.

Over and above creating community and parental involvement in our schools and helping to establish early education programs, advocates for black children must develop plans for encouraging talented, dynamic young people to become classroom teachers. A teacher shortage of tragic proportions is threatening our schools and minority teachers—especially black teachers—are an endangered species. In 1970 some 12 percent of all elementary and secondary teachers were black. Today that number is down to 8 percent and experts agree that if something isn't done, and done fast, the percentage of black teachers will drop even further—down to 5 percent.

Yet by the year 2000, black and other minority youngsters will make up about one-third of the school population of this nation. These youngsters will be in desperate need of positive role models, of people with whom they can identify, and who can encourage and inspire them to achieve. They need teachers with unsurpassed competency, commitment, and capacities for caring. Thus, aside from addressing the teacher shortage, I urge you to develop programs aimed at setting and enforcing the highest standards possible for teacher training.

My final point is this, we members of the black community—especially black parents—must become politically active in educational politics. The American educational reform movement has been, is, and will continue to be, politically motivated. This is true at every level. Policymakers respond most rapidly and effectively to those persons who know how to use the political process—who show up at school board meetings and city council meetings—those who are willing to organize and advocate for their concerns and ideas. If black parents and the black community do not advocate for black children and their educational needs, who will?

My presence at this meeting shows that my organization—the National Education Association—representing 1.8 million education employees—has pledged its support for the black children of America

and for programs to serve them better. I hereby renew that pledge of support.

If America does not provide *all* of its children with the schooling they need for a brighter future, then our nation could very well cease being united as a single people. We could very well degenerate into warring economic classes. We could very well witness disruptions that would make the upheavals of the sixties look like dress rehearsals. By helping to win the fight for guaranteed educational equality, we not only help black children, we help *all* Americans.

I would like to leave you with the words of the great Rabbi Hillel, who asked three questions that have resounded throughout the ages:

1. *If I am not for myself, who will be for me?* In other words, we must build our *own* future;

2. *If we are only for ourselves, what are we?* That is, building our future means working to benefit all; and

3. The question that most pertains to the urgency of our task of creating nationwide excellent, equitable education: *If not now, when?*

The time is now. Together we can get the job done. Thank you, and I wish you an exciting, productive conference.

*Address to the National Conference on Educating Black Children**

Marion Wright Edelman, *Executive Director, Children's Defense Fund*

I am delighted to be here. I want to join in thanking Gus Hawkins, because he has been laboring in the vineyard for black children, black families, and poor folks for a long time. That's a frustrating job in the Congress, but he has done it with grace, under sustained pressure. Nobody has been a better mentor than Gus for many of us young people. In fact, I remember coming from Mississippi in the early 1960s with Bob Moses, and Gus was the person who was there. I just want to thank him. We stand on his shoulders in so many ways.

I am so glad to see black leaders, educators, and community workers coming together to talk about black children and their education. I am reminded constantly of Frederick Douglass's belief in the importance of the past, the importance of the shoulders that we stand on. He warned us that we have no right to enjoy a child's share in the labors of our fathers and mothers, who worked so hard to get us to where we are, unless our children will be blessed by our labors. There is no better cause for labor today than that of investing in black children; if we lose our children, we lose our future as a black community. We have come too far to see our gains lost over the next decades.

Our children are sliding backwards in many ways. They are sliding backwards in mortality rates: many black babies are dying, not just because they are born prematurely (and too many are born prematurely), but because too many are born to poor mothers and

*Hunt Valley, Maryland, September 6, 1986

to poor teen mothers, who are less likely to get early prenatal health care. These babies are born at low birth weights and, therefore, are disproportionately more likely to die.

What is disturbing about this backward infant mortality trend—and it is happening to white babies as well, but at only half the frequency—is that a lot of these black babies are dying *after* being born at full term. They are dying after they go home, after 30 days of life. For many of those who die between that 30 days and one year, the cause is just plain old poverty.

One of the tragedies is that a black baby born today has nearly a 50 percent chance of being born poor in rich, rich America. That is something the black community just simply cannot tolerate. So I am glad that you are here.

I want to talk a little bit this morning about education, even though we know poverty is the central enemy of children, especially black children, in this country. It is the core issue with which we must deal. But within that I want to focus on the education of black children, to share a few facts, and then to talk about a few things.

I think that we can do a lot. We all have to get involved in a systematic, long-term way. There are no quick fixes. These problems can be solved, but it is going to take a whole lot more than going to meetings. It is going to take sustained, hard work to save our children. We absolutely *have* to do it if we are to save our community.

Black children whose families are poor are just as poorly educated as white children whose families are poor. That is the exact form of equal education that we, as a nation, have achieved—and that is progress. Thirty years ago, poor black children were worse-educated than white children. Today 31 percent of white 18- and 19-year-olds from families with incomes below the poverty level have dropped out. One of the things that works for us politically is that we can now really begin to get people to understand that the new poverty is affecting two-parent families; that there are more poor white kids than poor black kids; and that the white kids are having a lot of the same problems that the black kids are having. This changes the politics.

We need to constantly emphasize the common problems of poverty among whites as well as blacks; then we can talk about the disproportionate impact of that poverty on black children. In this country, until you can show that white folk are affected or middle-class folk are affected, nobody really wants to respond. Therefore, one of the good things and the bad things is that white child poverty has also grown dramatically in the last several years, which gives us a chance to talk about *all* of our children as having a great need

for help. Unfortunately, black children are still three times more likely than white children to be poor.

We at the Children's Defense Fund are going to continue to push very hard for the rethinking of our national priorities. We are trying to convince the nation and the states to reduce poverty among parents of black children right now. We know that such programs require billions of dollars and a redistribution of income on a scale exceeding that of World War II. We also know that this is a platform that is contrary to President Reagan's program of refreshment of the rich. We realize that it is going to be very hard to get the nation to invest the money necessary to bring poor families up to a decent standard of living and to prevent future problems. But we must keep speaking out for that.

If we could do away with family poverty, we could make major inroads to improving the educational expectations and chances of black children. Realistically, we know that we cannot reduce poverty among black children dramatically right away. We must find ways to improve the education of black children *now* in order to reduce black family poverty in the next generation.

As I was growing up, I was constantly bombarded with the importance of reading, of becoming educated, of achieving. The last thing my daddy told me, in the ambulance the night he died, was not to let anything get between me and my education. Education, you see, was always viewed as a route out for us, as a way of lifting the next generation out of poverty.

But giving back to the community was emphasized as well. It was education for *doing* that was drummed into our heads. Reinstilling education as a value in our community is very important.

I went back to my 25th high school reunion recently. What struck me was that almost all of us students came back. Many of our teachers were there as well. In our segregated little Southern town, our teachers were not terrifically well-educated, but they instilled in us an eagerness to learn. They remembered every one of us. They also had all the stories about how we cut up in class.

I was reminded about and touched by how much the adults in our lives cared about us. They knew us. They hung in there with us. They were our Sunday School teachers and our public school teachers. The whole community of adults took responsibility for us and they have followed us with great interest.

It is amazing that, out of the 100 of us who graduated from this substandard public high school in segregated South Carolina, about 98 went on to college. We are now doing amazing things all over the country. Being poor was no excuse not to achieve then, and it should not be now.

I realize now that, in many ways, I am still trying to live the lives of those older, poor black folk who did not get a chance to go to school. I am trying to live through and be worthy of their encouragement—the chicken boxes, the dollar bills squeezed into youthful palms. Ours was a community that valued education, even though the overwhelming majority of the adults were neither literate nor educated. But they had hope and high expectations for us and we tried to fulfill them. It is that sense of community expectations and community valuing, and the sense of black children as important to the community's future, that we must reestablish today.

We must define new ways of reconnecting with our young people. As children, my generation felt that we could do anything in the world despite all the odds that were stacked against us back then. But then, we had all these adults supporting and believing in us at a time when the outside world told us that we were nothing, when everything was segregated, and everybody in the political arena was saying that blacks were second-class citizens. Yet, our parents constantly said to us that this was not so. Our teachers constantly said that this was not so. So did our church leaders. And we believed them.

The point is that today's black community must find ways to begin to provide a buffer and a counterforce for our black children. We must believe in them and we must tell them that they are worth something; that they can achieve; that we do not care if they come out of a one-parent family or a poor family; they *can* make it.

We have got to provide that kind of support in order to give our young people self-esteem and confidence so that they can weather the storms of negative opposition from outside institutions. We must take two approaches: 1) We need to help black children see the value of education and help them believe that they can succeed; 2) We must also try to get government to invest in eradicating family poverty so that there will be fewer poor children. We must try to do both.

We are building on the foundations that our forebears have already laid. Poor children, black or white, need our help to stay in and to do well in school. In order for them to succeed, we adults must play into the politics of this country. At the moment, we must see to it that all poor children begin to do much better in school than they have ever done before. That is the promise and the burden of Ron Edmonds' work—that we can teach *all* children. There are too many folk teaching in the classrooms who do not really believe that our children can learn. We need to begin to change that approach.

We have got to begin, over and over if need be, to talk about the cost of failing to invest in our young people's education from the early grades through high school. It is simply more cost-effective

to educate children in the first place than it is to educate them in the second place through remedial programs. Special education programs seldom succeed as well as remedial programs in increasing student achievement.

We must also examine the way that special education programs classify children. In 1984, the Office of Civil Rights reported that almost 200,000 black children were in Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) programs. Black children are still three times more likely to be in such programs than are white children and they are five times less likely to be placed in gifted and talented programs than are white, non-Hispanic children. These self-contained, expensive EMR programs must be replaced with instructional programs that return students promptly to full academic progress. We must also see that students from poor families who do maintain academic progress are challenged even further to achieve their fullest potential.

Each year only about 325,000 black students graduate from public schools. Almost 600,000 are suspended at least once, and 375,000 are corporally punished. Black students are suspended and beaten at rates two to three times higher than those for white, non-Hispanic students. I do not want to be misunderstood—most schools can always show that the student punished deserved the punishment. What the school cannot show, in most cases, is whether punished students were also receiving the educational challenges that they deserved.

You must recall that Edmonds found not only that all students could be taught, but also that students who were well-taught were also well-behaved. Students from poor families who receive poor education often behave poorly in school. We need schools where more students get diplomas than stripes.

But the diploma is not enough. In 1977, black high school graduates were just as likely as white high school graduates to start college the following fall. By 1984, 58 percent of white high school graduates went on to college, but only 40 percent of black high school graduates went on to college. Student financial aid cuts were a main contributing cause. However much we improve the academic performance of children in poor families, their families will still be poor when their children are ready to go to college. Financial aid is essential.

Still more must be done. We must also reverse the policies that put severe pressure on poor families. For example, college students are no longer eligible for Social Security survivor benefits from deceased parents. This budget-cutting measure takes money that well-to-do families do not need and hurts poor families for whom such funds made college possible. These changes automatically apply

to the railroad retirement programs whose college-age beneficiaries were disproportionately black.

We really have to begin focusing in on these areas, but I want to emphasize two or three more. We have got to talk about a preventive investment strategy. Many of you know that I am busy working on the issues of teen pregnancy and the growth of single-parent households. The implications of these two trends, together with the growing child and family poverty in the black community, are far-reaching because everything gets back to school issues in many ways and back to poverty issues in other ways.

There are a few facts about the relationship between poverty, academic achievement, and teenage pregnancy. If we are going to talk about family stability and the capacity of a new generation of young blacks to raise the next generation of black children, we must examine the following factor: American teenagers who are poor and who lack basic education skills are six times more likely to become pregnant than their more affluent peers, regardless of race.

We must counter the notion that only black girls are getting pregnant. Actually, more white girls than black ones get pregnant. The birth rate for unmarried black teens is going down, although it remains much higher than that of white teens. For unmarried white teens, birth rates increased by more than two-thirds from 1970 to 1980.

When we focus on the real relationship between pregnancy and childbirth and poverty, these factors help explain the politics of the issue. Teens with similar family incomes and basic skills in reading and math, whether white or black or Hispanic, have nearly identical rates of childbearing. One in five poor teens with lower than average basic skills is a mother. Teens with poor skills are five times more likely to become mothers before age 16 than those with average basic skills. Young women with poor or fair basic skills are four times more likely than those with average basic skills to have more than one child while in their teens.

Even older 18- and 19-year-old women with poor basic skills are two-and-a-half times more likely to be mothers than those with average basic skills. Eighteen and 19-year-old men with poor basic skills are three times more likely to be fathers than those with average basic skills. Poor teenagers are four times more likely to have poor basic skills than those with family incomes above poverty. Among youths living in poverty, four out of ten white teenagers, more than one-half of Hispanic teenagers, and six out of ten black teenagers fall into the deficient basic skills group.

Then there is the downward spiral in the ages of young mothers. I am particularly concerned about this. Younger and younger children are having babies. Not too long ago, I received a call from a woman in Chicago whose 12-year-old daughter had just had a baby. That is not unusual—we have a number of 12-year-olds who have babies. What was unusual was that the grandmother was only 24!

When one looks at the compressing of generations in family settings the situation seems very difficult indeed. When thinking teen pregnancies, we must start thinking step-by-step about what we can do to save *two* generations of children. This is what gets me up at 3:00 a.m. every morning when I start work. These are the kinds of issues and problems that we need to address in our deliberations.

These data and situations such as I have just described reinforce the CDF approach. At CDF, we believe that *hope* is the best contraception for teen pregnancy prevention. Young people in this country who do not feel good about themselves and who are already behind in school do not think that they are going to be any better off at age 21 than they are at age 16. They have no reason to try to delay having a baby. What we have to begin to reinstill in them is hope—and positive life options—as the crucial underlying foundation of any teen pregnancy prevention strategy. Ultimately, we want young people to feel good about themselves in their families, in their schools, and in their jobs.

What we need to do is to keep that 14-year-old girl in school and provide decent health care for her. We need to teach her how to get that baby through its first year of life. We need to tell her about good nutritional habits, and about pre-natal and post-natal care. What can we do for the baby after it is born? We can provide infant and child care programs to give that baby a basic start in the crucial first three years before we can get the child into a Head Start program. We can then expand Head Start so that it serves all of the poor children eligible for it, and not just the 16 percent that it currently reaches.

If we are going to do any single thing, I hope that we will focus on that 14-year-old and her infant. We must figure out what she needs to become self-sufficient and create a viable family unit so that her child, and her child's child, will not grow up in a total life of poverty. We must prevent that 14-year-old mother from having that second baby within two years, as one-third of them do now.

Forty percent of all girls who drop out do so because of pregnancy or marriage. Schools have a great opportunity to identify young people who are at risk of becoming pregnant, who will drop out, and who will typically face chronic unemployment and persistent poverty

as adults. We need to be looking at these early warning systems. We need to be tracking our children from the youngest ages to see if we cannot intervene in a preventive fashion. We have a better chance of saving them after the first child, but once they have the second one, it is so much harder.

How do we get the schools to both identify and respond to young people before they have major problems, before they drop out of school, before they get pregnant? We need to think about strategies for prevention and intervention. We need to build stronger bonds between parents and community institutions in order to reinforce the efforts of the schools. We have to talk about the entire community taking responsibility for its children. Schools need to be encouraged to welcome parents in and to accept some of the supplemental help that parents themselves may be able to provide.

We hear a lot about the Japanese education system. I spent the summer of 1985 in Japan. What I did not know until I went there is that 75 percent of the children go to school after school, on weekends and all summer long. The Japanese call these after-school programs "tutorials." They have tutorials for everything. There is one for remedial education, one for gifted and talented children, one for children who do well on tests in such areas as art and music. It is a seven-day-a-week-12-months-a-year-keep-them-busy schedule, in which the whole family is involved. The Japanese have a very low teen pregnancy rate for two simple reasons: 1) Teenagers do not have any *places* to have sex, due to the severe housing shortage; and 2) They do not have any time or energy *left* to have sex—*they are worked to death!*

In many ways, that was the theory our own parents had. I do not think we had an idle moment. Our parents were always plotting on what we were to do in the evenings and on weekends. The church kept us busy. Our children are on the streets because we are not providing enough positive alternatives for them. I do not know how much we are going to reform public schools overnight, but I do think that what we can do now is to set up a massive network of supplemental tutorials. We need to get the churches and all of those who are old enough who have nothing to do involved in tutoring so that our children can get into college. We need to be tutoring them, to show them that they can be as good in math and science as they can be in basketball. There ought to be a massive, first-rate tutorial system to supplement the school system, so that our children have a reason to stay off the streets. These programs need to begin early, but they must be especially directed at teenagers.

We also need mentoring programs that are more than simply bringing successful adults in to say "hi" to the kids once a week. Many more of us need to get involved almost as adoptive or foster parents for those kids whose parents cannot do for them what middle-class parents do for their children—poor kids do not need a thing different from what middle-class kids need. We are going to have to provide that kind of extra family support so that we can help poor families in the black community to survive and begin to function on their own. All of us need to take on one or two children and begin to say that we are going to do that parenting and working with their families; the men are going to have to do it with the boys, and the women will have to do it with the girls. These things are going to have to be done in a massive, systematic way.

We also need to have some way for the kids to have some fun. Recreation is very important. When I was younger we were segregated from going anywhere, so the members of my daddy's church built a playground behind the church and we had all kinds of activities there. We do not have ways today for children to have constructive fun in many of our communities. That is one of our failings as adults. Yet, I have been very moved recently by the creativity of some local communities in this regard. Some churches have figured out that they can buy VCRs and show movies for the youth. A Jacksonville church put on a skating rink dance for teenagers. In the middle of it, they cut off the music and gave the youngsters a talk about sex education—then they put the music back on!

Our children are absolutely disconnected. We need to go back to our communities to figure out how schools, churches, fraternities, and sororities can be used to give young people some way of relating to adults. We adults always say we are "too busy." We are too busy to be home to tell the children to cut off the television set. *We* should be cutting off the television set ourselves! We are too busy to sit and teach them, through example, how to read. My daddy used to make me sit down with him every night and read for an hour. I remember the most mortifying experience in my growing up happened one day when I slipped a *True Confessions* into my *Life* magazine; when my daddy discovered what I was reading, he made me read it aloud!

The fact is, I learned how to read because my parents took the time to do things with me and to insist that I join them. It was a way of reflecting their values. They *showed* me what was important. And it was not just my parents: There was also this lucid and illiterate lady who cleaned in the church; there was also Miss Kate Winston who found some time somehow to run the scout meetings.

These adults did not have a lot of education, but they conveyed a message of caring.

The essential thing that our children are lacking today is just that—the message of caring and of high expectations from us. This is where we have got to start. Then we can start talking about the schools and the health and welfare departments. It has got to come from within us. If *we* care, then we are also going to fight the external world to make these institutions and programs do what they ought to do.

We must begin to talk about how we can provide a network of support systems and how we can forge stronger bonds with our school officials and other community workers to give our children what they need. Together, we can provide more comprehensive approaches to the problems and needs of "at risk" youth. We have to look at our children's needs for opportunity. They need jobs, hope, and a good education. Again, what we do for middle-class kids, we must do for poor kids.

What is encouraging for me is that when one looks at teen pregnancy prevention and at all the efforts that have been made, one sees that we are now trying to deal with children in a comprehensive way. Teen pregnancy is a problem that affects all races and economic strata. We should be clear that it is a special problem among poor and minority groups who typically can offer their young people fewer opportunities.

It is going to take ten years, at least, to turn this problem around. We are going to have to try everything. If the first ten things we try do not work, then we are going to have to go back and try ten more. We *cannot* give up on our children.

At CDF, we are trying to talk about general strategies to prevent poverty. We are activating communities by training residents to collect data and to provide a variety of programs. We are trying to talk about creating a national and a community atmosphere for change.

Through a multi-media campaign, we are emphasizing that teen pregnancy is *everybody's* problem. The first set of adolescent pregnancy prevention messages we created was aimed at adults, both black and white. This is everybody's daughter's problem, these messages said. The next set of posters and television spots were directed at the kids themselves. We encourage you to see that our posters are posted in every school, health and welfare department office, and community center. We have developed radio public service announcements as well, initiated by a black disc jockey in Mississippi, that have been picked up by black radio stations nationwide.

We are also trying to develop messages for boys. A sad commentary on American culture, and on sex role differences in parental responsibility, is that we have still not gotten across to boys that they could lose if they become fathers too soon—we *know* that girls are going to lose.

CDF now has a program at Lorton Reformatory near Washington, D.C. We are designing our focus group there with men who are now 24 and 25. We want to see if we can learn from them what might have made a difference when they were 12 or 13 or 14. As young black boys, what might have kept them out of trouble or kept them from fathering children?

I don't know what we are going to come up with on the boys, but we have *got* to come up with something. The basic message for now is that girls, basically, have the burden of learning how to say "no" to boys, mainly because the girls are the ones who are going to have to bear the consequences. We are looking for a way to get boys to understand that they, too, have a responsibility for the children they father.

A few final points and I will be done.

Teacher education is very much in the news. We need to do a better job of encouraging more good people to enter the teaching profession. Obviously, we need to reform the salary scale and to begin to provide positive incentives. Reforming teacher education is going to take a long time.

The single most important way to improve the education system rests in the principal selection process. Principals are critically important. Good principals and good school leaders can make bad teachers better; they can make good teachers more creative. We need to focus on how principals are selected and how to get the black community more involved in that process in their schools. We must encourage more black school teachers to begin to prepare for creative black school administration.

We must not forget the budget process. We can talk about all the policies we want, but in our local communities—as elsewhere—those who control the money, control policy. The black community has not been working enough on affecting budget decisions at the federal or state levels. Gus Hawkins knows what a struggle it is, and yet he has been able to manage to get new increases in Title I this year, along with increases in Head Start funding. But, we should see to it that Head Start's allotment is doubled in the next four years—we know that it is a program that makes a difference in the lives of our children. This means that we have got to get involved in the budget process. Chapter I, the compensatory educa-

tion program, must be extended for all children who need it, up through high school. This is a budget decision. We must all join to see that increased funding is made available for early childhood and compensatory education, and for child nutrition and other child health and welfare programs that aid poor children.

Lastly, I want to go back to my initial point. Underlying all that we must do is the task of reinstilling caring and adult values into the lives of young people. Our young people are disconnected from the community strengths that kept us going in the past. They do not know their history. They do not know who they are. They do not know how to struggle.

These days, I worry as much about middle-class black children as I do about poor black children. I have had two stunning experiences with smart, black Ivy-League kids recently. One group I met had not even heard of W. E. B. DuBois—that is really bad. One young woman, among a group of black students from the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, and Yale, was from Atlanta. But she had never heard of Benjamin Mays! Now, you know, that is a problem that we *have* to fix.

We are not *talking* to our children. We are not teaching them their history. We do not take them to the places they need to visit. My daddy used to drag me off on such visits from the time I could walk. I remember meeting Mary McLeod Bethune when I was eight years old. I had never seen such a prideful, strong black woman before. Something in that kind of presence gets through to a child.

We must have some real discussion in our community about what it is that we are instilling in our young people, both middle-class and poor. Something is wrong with what we are teaching our young people about the value of education when academic achievement is not increasing along with rising middle-class status.

We are not instilling the basic values in our children—that they are being educated *for* something, that they have to *give back*. We have got to find ways of bringing our youthful "talented tenth" back to the aid of the deprived majority so that we can begin to form a cohesive community again. We have got to get our young people away from all this excessive materialism that seems to drive them.

This ethic of service to the community must be reestablished. As a child, I knew that every Sunday afternoon I had to take folk home from church and I knew that I had to go visit the hospital. I also learned that there was nothing that I was too good to do to help someone. I was taught that we are here "on loan" from the Lord and that we must give back through service to others. We are not teaching our children that. That is the core problem. What we

are going to have to go back to, if we are going to succeed in moving ahead again and stopping these backward trends in our community, is the ethic of service.

What we need as a black community is to show, through example and through what we say and do to our children, that we have high aims. I want to end with a quote from Dr. Benjamin Mays:

> It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal, the tragedy of life lies in having no goal to reach. It is not a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal, but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach for the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim, is a sin.

Ronald Reagan is going to be gone soon, but Ronald Reagan cannot beat us. Only *we* can beat us. The key is for us to give our children a sense that they can achieve, that they can be somebody, and that they *have* to be somebody. It is we who will determine the future of the black community. It is we who can decide what we are going to contribute. Being poor is no excuse. Being a single parent is no excuse. We, as black adults, have got to set the tone and the example. We have got to get our children to aim high, but we can only do that if they see us aiming high as well.

The fact that we are all gathered here this morning shows that we are ready to begin doing just that. I am very grateful to have a chance to share this task with you.

*Remarks to the Education Workshop, Black Caucus Legislative Weekend**

Alease Gant, *Board Member, National Education Association*

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor and a privilege for me to participate on this panel. I want to thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus for bringing us together this weekend, and I want to congratulate Chairman Hawkins for his leadership in last month's conference on educating black children.

You know, when I first started teaching English, in a segregated black Virginia high school some 23 years ago, my students seemed to be infused with a certain kind of hope and faith in the future. They had a certain kind of determination to succeed. By and large they came from close-knit families—families that encouraged them to take their studies very seriously. This was true whether they had one or two parents living at home, or whether the family head was an elderly grandmother or an older sister.

Today, although I teach in a so-called integrated school, most of my black pupils are still segregated. I teach three classes of twelfth-grade remedial English, in which about 95 percent of the students are black, and two classes of tenth-grade college preparatory English, in which most of the students are white. The students in my remedial classes are no less bright than any other students, but they seem to have given up.

You cannot blame them, though. Most of them live in bleak, low-income housing projects where they have no role models for success. All too often, they seem to lack the self-discipline it takes to complete even the most fundamental assignments. Again, you cannot blame them. Most of my black students live structureless lives

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at home, so how can we expect them to even know what discipline is? If they do not even have regular times to eat their meals at home or go to bed, how can we expect them to grasp a concept as basic as that of setting aside regular time periods to study?

I want to stress one thing: Just as you cannot blame the students for this sad state of affairs, you cannot blame their parents, either. Their parents are often either single, and overburdened by the problems involved in keeping their families together and making ends meet; or their parents are together, but forced to work long, hard hours just to keep food on the table.

In fact, I do not think that it is useful to try to blame anybody. The question is not, "Who's to blame?" The question is, "What are we, as teachers, parents, and advocates for black youth, going to do to help our students to receive the kind of education they will need to live in the world of the future?"

It is not easy being a teacher today. As a teacher, I have to try to build up the self-confidence of my students. I have to convince them that they can do the work, *if they just try*. I have to try to build in my students a sense of structure and self-discipline.

When I attended school, we students had been trained by Mom and Dad; Aunt Bea and Uncle Joe; Grandma Rainey and Grandpa Bill; that nosey Mrs. Smith, our next-door neighbor; and Mr. Jones at the corner store; not to mention Pastor Johnson and Miss Lucy, our Sunday School teacher. Oh, yes, I forgot to include my older brother. We had to mind him, too. All of these folks were instrumental in guiding us to respect our teachers and all adults and to heed what they said. We were in school, they told us, to learn in order to get ahead.

A funny thing happened, though. A lot of us grew up remembering everybody who butted into our lives and who told us what to do, and we resolved that our children would not have to mind anyone but *us*. Consequently, today's children have not been trained by quite so many people. They do not have to answer to that nosey next-door neighbor. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles can love our kids, but not correct them. We do not go to church very often anymore and rarely attend Sunday School, so the children are not worried by those adults, either. Nowadays, we shop at large supermarkets where the cashiers are so busy, they hardly have time to even notice our kids.

We have not disciplined our kids very much, either, because we love them so much that it breaks our hearts to hear them cry. We have taught our kids to stand up for their rights and not let *anyone* take advantage of them, not even their parents. We always give in

and let them have what they want. We know that they should do their homework and read more, but. . .there was a good movie on the cable channel, and we told them that they could stay up late this one time (or was it the third time?) to see that movie. You see (we rationalize), they have their own television in their room, and we don't want to watch it with them. After all, we say, we can't stand all that profanity and blood!

Teach our kids?! It's not easy being a teacher today. But, I firmly believe that it will take more than teachers to guarantee that our black students succeed in school, especially those who are burdened by the deprivations concomitant with poverty.

The most important thing that parents and members of the neighborhood community can do to help our black children succeed in school today is to help them build good self-concepts. Make them feel loved and cared about. Too many of my students say their parents don't give a damn about them. They think that we do not love them, that they are worthless—so what's the use of paying attention to assignments in class? Parents: Hug them, touch them, listen to them and talk *to* them, not *at* them. Neighbors, friends of the family: Take time to show that you care about the youth of your community; learn their names; smile and say "hello," and take a moment to converse with them; do not preach at them, but do give advice in a positive manner. Small measures such as these can result in surprising decreases in vandalism in a community.

For too many years we have left our children to their own devices. A well-known maxim is that, "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop." It is no less appropriate today than when I was a child. We must keep our students, our children, busy with positive, constructive activities that will promote learning and allow them no time to create mischief. Too many of our children simply have nothing to talk or write about when they get to school. We must encourage black parents to send, better yet, to *take* their children to Sunday School and church activities, Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings, Little League, Boys and Girls Clubs programs, YWCA and YMCA activities, recreation centers, libraries, and public concerts. These activities help our children to learn. They give students experiences which they can draw upon in their learning activities at school.

I do not believe that every child should go to college, but every child should have a skill that will provide a livelihood. At one time, black students were disproportionately shoved into vocational and trade courses. Now, black students are not even being taught those skills. In the near future will we be able to find a black bricklayer or carpenter? Should not black students be taught refrigeration, television repair, diesel engine maintenance, or plumbing? Many

of our students are finally graduating after twelve or more years of school; yet not only are they unqualified to go on to college, they are also unable to sell merchandise, use a typewriter, or build a cabinet. This is deplorable.

Yet, I have not given up on my black students. I have seen too many cases of success to give up. I have seen too many cases where students have overcome horrendous obstacles and have done well in school. I know from first-hand experience that almost any young person can learn—can do almost anything—if they have someone to motivate them and guide them.

Who are these children? They are *all* our children, as described by Julie Ellis in her poem:

I'm the child with no direction,
No place to run and nowhere to go;
They've branded me defiant and sometimes call me slow.

I'm the boy with the smileless laugh
And the girl much too old for her time;
The faces you don't want to remember
But can't seem to get out of your mind.

It's me, the child of the universe;
I hang out and live in the street;
I've got guts, savvy and mother wit
With a rap that's hard to beat.

I'm the one that love forgot, care abandoned
And hope took leave.
Seems I don't have much of a future.
Is that hard for you to believe?

Have you forgotten me already—
Why, you passed me by just yesterday
Shaking your head and mumbling to yourself:
It's a shame these kids act this way!

I'm the kid that's lively and bright.
Though I may not look the part,
Don't judge me merely by appearances
'Cause there's lots of love in my heart.

You say I don't care about nothin' or nobody
And with me you get quite annoyed.
I'm really not self-destructive,
It's just that I'm being destroyed.

Hey, look, I'm the hope of the future.
Put your faith in me at all costs.
Let me be the one to be found
Before there's a chance to be lost.

I can be the guarantee of tomorrow
But you've got to deal with me today.
I know I'm capable of achieving
If you'll just lead the way!

Working together through the political arena, and through every arena in America, we can create a system of education second to none in the world—a system that guarantees excellence to *all* its youngsters, regardless of their race, regardless of their ethnic group, and regardless of their economic background. My teaching experience has shown me that when teachers, parents, administrators, and communities work together for and with students, effective schooling results.

All of us *must* teach our children.

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